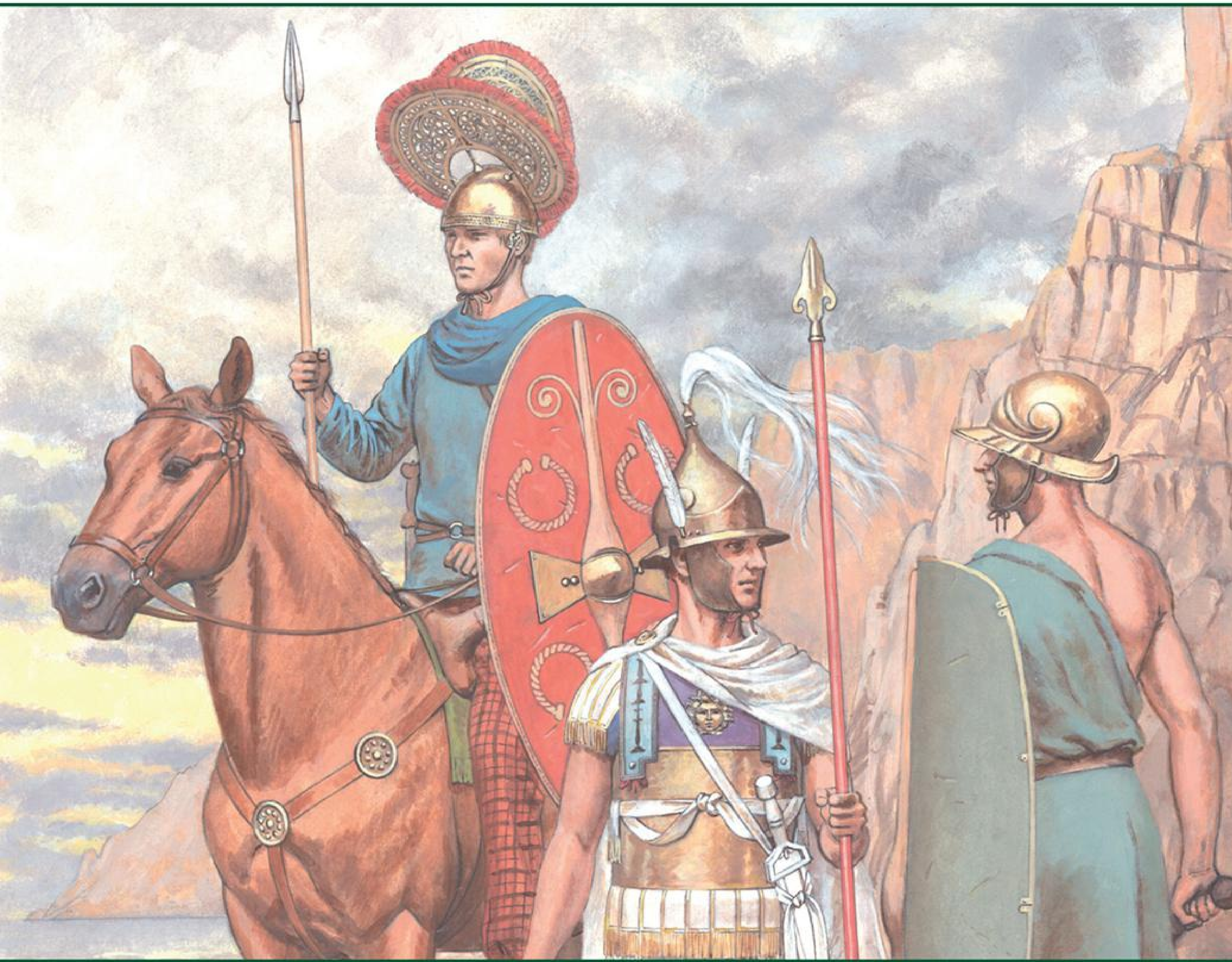
Armies of Julius Caesar 58–44 BC



RAFFAELE D'AMATO
& FRANÇOIS GILBERT

ILLUSTRATED BY FLORENT VINCENT

Elite • 241

Armies of Julius Caesar

58–44 BC

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Series editors Martin Windrow & Nick Reynolds

DEDICATION

To the Italian and French peoples, both children of immortal Rome.

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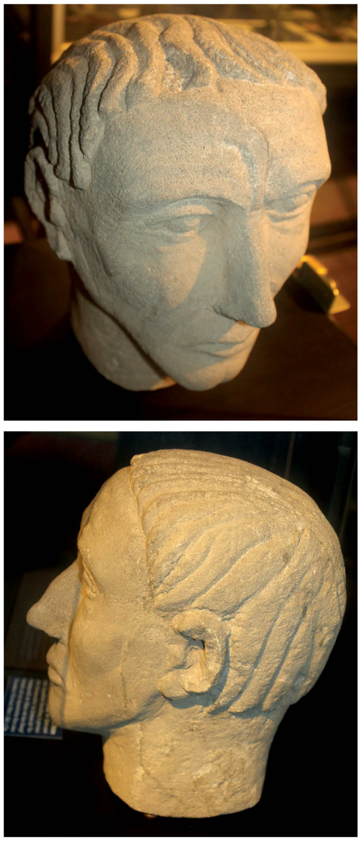
ARMIES OF JULIUS CAESAR 58–44 BC

INTRODUCTION

There is probably nobody in the world who does not associate the name of Rome with that of Gaius Julius Caesar. A man of complex personality – brilliant, charismatic, relentlessly ambitious, and unscrupulous – Caesar unquestionably earned the most imperishable military reputation in the whole of Roman history. He changed the destiny of Rome, and, although he bore the title 'dictator', it is arguable that we should consider him (as did the historian Suetonius) as Rome's first 'emperor'. It is hard to think of another figure who so impressed his reputation on human history that his name became synonymous with rule based upon military might, as Tsar, Kaiser, or simply 'Caesar'.

This book is devoted to his armies, which have only recently – and in a few works – been analyzed from the viewpoint of their actual equipment and accoutrements. Despite the glory earned by, for instance, Caesar's Tenth Legion, it was an army not composed solely of legionaries, but also of allies: Celts, Germanics, Africans and Easterners.[1] As a quasi-cosmopolitan army, it thus anticipated the well-known image of the later Imperial Roman military machine. Thanks to archaeological discoveries in recent years, and to a more careful reading of the original literary sources, we have today a more precise picture of Caesar's armies.



Life-size portrait head of a statue of Gaius Julius Caesar in quartz sandstone, from a river find in Noricum, mid-1st century BC. (Schloss Deutschlandsberg Museum, Austria; author's photos, courtesy of the Museum)

Note

1 It should be noted that that the word *'legionarius'* was a generic appellation for a legionary soldier but not a technical term; throughout Roman history the designation was always *'miles'* (e.g. Caes. *BC* I, 78; *BA* LXIX, 2).

CHRONOLOGY (BC)

64–62	Gaius Julius Caesar (100–44 BC) begins to emerge as an actor in Roman politics. Although of an ancient aristocratic family, Caesar is associated with the popular Marian party, recalling the legacy of the renowned former consul and soldier Gaius Marius (157–86 BC).
60–59	‘First Triumvirate’ – alliance of convenience between three ambitious aristocrats, all former, current or future consuls. In the agreed division of spoils, Caesar receives the governorship of Gallia Cisalpina (upper Italy, roughly north of the rivers Po and Rubicon) and Gallia Narbonensis (southern France, west of the Alps). Gnaeus Pompeius ‘Magnus’ (Pompey ‘the Great’ – 106–48 BC), who had won many victories in Spain, the East, and the Mediterranean, would be governor of Iberia (Spain) and North Africa; and Marcus Licinius Crassus (*c.*115–53 BC), who had crushed the slave rebellion led by Spartacus, the governor of Syria. Crassus, reportedly the richest man in Rome, is closer to Caesar, and military rivalry simmers between Caesar and Pompey.
58–56	Siege of Genaba (Geneva) by Divico with 210,000 Helvetii warriors is broken by Caesar, now proconsul, with five legions and some Aedui auxiliaries, particularly cavalry; 80,000 Helvetii are reportedly killed at Bibracte. (As always in antiquity, these huge figures quoted by Caesar are impossible to confirm or disprove.) The Germanic invasion of Gaul is halted by Caesar: 80,000 Suebi are killed and their leader Ariovistus is wounded. In north-eastern Gaul, Caesar and his deputy Titus Labienus successfully subdue the Germano-Celtic Belgae; the Atrebatii tribe are defeated and the Nervii annihilated on the river Sabis (Sambre), and 53,000 Belgae are reduced to slavery after the final conquest. Caesar also defeats the Venetii of Armorica (greater Brittany), who lose 220 ships in a single battle.

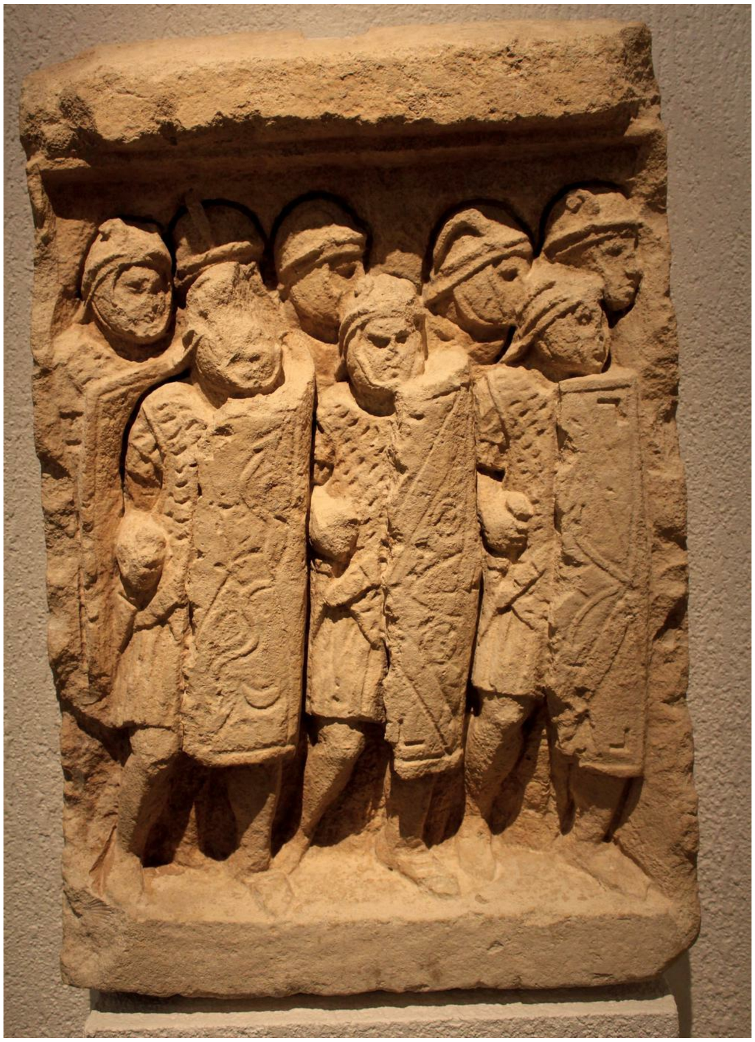
55	Another horde of 430,000 Germanic tribesmen (including Usipeti and Tencteri) invade Gaul. After defeating them, Caesar builds a major bridge across the Rhine and ravages deep into Germanic territory. He also lands with an expedition in south-east Britain, and fights a number of battles before returning to Gaul for the winter.
54–53	With four legions and 4,000 Celtic cavalrymen, Caesar mounts a second expedition to Britain; Cassivellaunus, leader of a tribal confederation north of the river Thames, finally sues for peace. Meanwhile, in the western Rhineland in winter 54 BC, a force under Q. Titurius Sabinus is wiped out by the rebellious Eburones led by Ambiorix and Catuvolcus; in revenge, the returning Caesar destroys the Eburones and their Germanic allies the Treveri.
	Death of Crassus and near-destruction of his army at the hands of the Parthians at Carrhae in Mesopotamia in May 53 BC; Gaius Cassius Longinus leads survivors back to Syria. With Crassus's influence removed, there will be no brake upon the rivalry between Pompey and Caesar.
52	Gallic chief Vercingetorix of the Averni leads a major pan-tribal rebellion. In response to a massacre of Romans at Cenabum (Orleans), Caesar destroys Avaricum (Bourges) and kills 40,000 Gauls, but is checked at Gergovia, the Averni capital. In September, Vercingetorix is besieged with 100,000 followers in his stronghold at Alesia by Caesar with 10–12 legions (probably including the Legio Alaudae, raised in Transalpine Gaul), who surround the hill position with a double system of fortifications facing inwards and outwards. After Caesar defeats a 250,000-strong Gallic relief army, Vercingetorix surrenders; he is executed after being exhibited in Caesar's triumphal procession through Rome.
49–47	In 48 BC Caesar's governorship ends, and he is ordered by the Senate to disband his army before returning to Italy. When he

leads his Legio XIII south across the Rubicon in January 49 BC he is deemed to be a rebel, and civil war breaks out between Caesar and Pompey, who sides with the Optimates faction in the Senate. Unable to defend Rome, the Optimates transfer to Greece, where, at Pharsalus in July 48 BC, Pompey's army of 50,000 is destroyed by Caesar's veteran legions. Pompey escapes to Egypt, but is murdered by King Ptolemy XIV. In the subsequent Egyptian ('Alexandrine') campaign Caesar supports the young Cleopatra against her brother Ptolemy. Besieged in Alexandria, he strikes back in March 47 BC after reinforcements arrive from Asia Minor; the Egyptian army is destroyed by Celtic and Germanic cavalry and Caesar's legionaries. In July 47 BC Caesar defeats Pharnaces, son of King Mithridates VI of Pontus, in a lightning campaign south of the Black Sea (the occasion of his boast that 'I came, I saw, I conquered').

46–44 In February 46 BC, at the battle of Thapsus in modern Tunisia, Caesar defeats the reconstituted Senatorial and Pompeian forces allied to King Juba I of Mauretania. In March 45 BC Caesar finally defeats the sons of Pompey (Gn. Pompeius and Sextus), and his own former general Titus Labienus, at Munda in southern Spain. Now elected by the subservient Senate as Dictator, Caesar celebrates triumphs in Rome. On the Ides of March (15 March) 44 BC, he is assassinated by conspirators led by G. Cassius Longinus and M. Junius Brutus, in the name of restoring the government of the *Res. Publica*.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CONSULAR ARMY

Roman social organization was complex and evolved over time, but in the simplest terms it was structured in bands of wealth. Property determined progressive levels of taxation, and also eligibility for political appointments, which were decided by a weighted collegial electoral system. At the top were the patrician families *(gentes*, sing. *gens)* of the wealthiest hereditary land-owning aristocracy (the 'senatorial' class – although individuals of lower birth might occasionally enter the Senate). Below these was a large and more diverse patrician 'equestrian' or 'knightly' class. These patrician classes were eligible for both a hierarchy of appointments ('magistracies') in the civil administration, and for military commands in time of war. Then came five descending classes of plebeian common citizens, originally differentiated by the level of military equipment each man could provide for himself. Finally, the very poorest class of *proletarii,* with less than 400 *denarii* of property, were excused military service before the early 2nd century BC. At the bottom of society were, in order, 'Latin' (i.e. Italic) non-Romans, resident foreigners, and 'freedmen' (ex-slaves), who enjoyed some partial citizenship rights; and finally slaves, who had none.



Stele depicting *milites* thought to represent the Gallic-recruited Legio V Alaudae, found near Roman Glanum (modern Saint-Remy-de-Provence) and dated to the 40s BC; they clearly wear the *gallica* ringmail body armour. Legionaries were now armed with a heavy shield (*scutum* – note the rectangular shape and varying decoration), javelins and a sword. The standard Roman javelin or *pilum* was now carried without distinction by all the three ancient categories of troops within the legion: the *hastati* (previously armed with the *hasta* thrusting-spear), the *principes* and the *triarii*. (Musée Gallo-Romaine de Lyon; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

Under the Republican constitution the highest political appointment was the *consul,* of whom two were elected by the Senate each year. Officially only a consul was authorized to raise an army (although in times of internal strife some magnates, for instance Pompey, ignored this). He might be re-elected as consul subsequently (Gaius Marius famously served seven terms), but under normal conditions he could not serve consecutive terms. Therefore, if a military campaign continued longer than the consul's term in office, the

Senate could extend his command mandate, under the title of *proconsul*. (The title of *imperator* was an honorific given to a victorious commander directly by his soldiers, if more than 1,000 enemies were killed in a battle.)

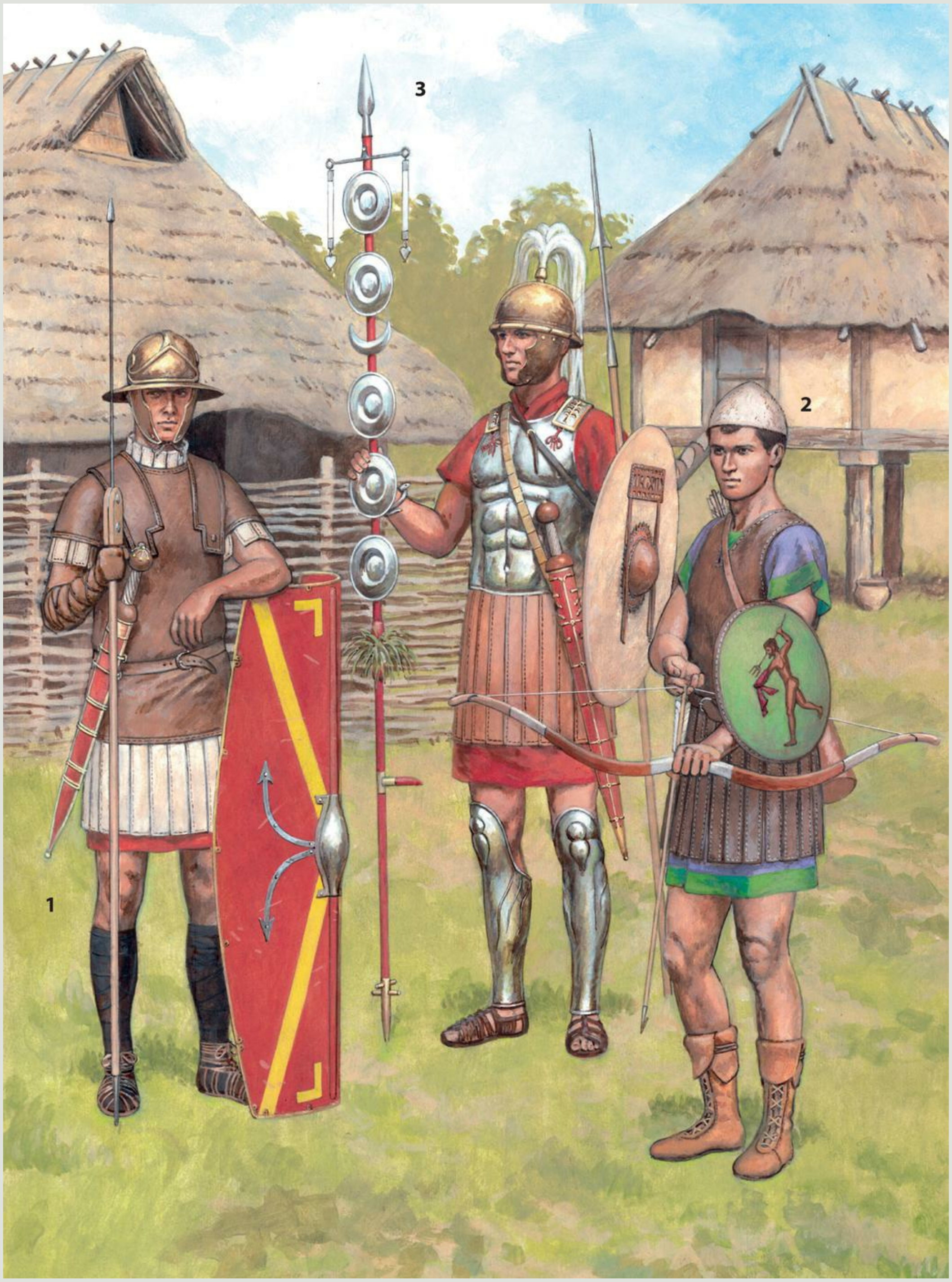
Legiones

Each consular army *(exercitus)* was formed of four legions (*legiones)*, raised from citizens aged from 17 to 46 who were chosen from an annual levy on the Capitoline Hill. From the time of Marius (*c.* 104–85 BC) the component parts of the legion – the cohorts (*cohortes),* and their component maniples (*manipuli)* and centuries *(centuriae)* – ceased to be simple tactical aggregations, and evolved into permanent structured ‘units and sub-units’.

The cohort consisted of three maniples: one each of *triarii* (or *pili*), *principes* and *hastati* – the ancient subdivisions of troop types by age and experience. Initially the cohort comprised 300 men, later increased to 500 (Plut., *Pomp*., LIX; App., I, 82), or to 600 when it became a permanent entity (Plut., *Sull*., IX; *Mar*., XXXV; Cic., XXXVI; Cic., *Ad Att*., V, 15; App., *Mithr*. LXXII). During war service, of course, this was an aspiration rather than an inflexible rule; for example, we read that at the battle of Pharsalus Caesar’s cohorts fielded 275 men and those of Pompey 409 (*BC*, III, 2, 87). That the cohort now had an established identity is confirmed by the fact that Caesar recorded his army’s strength at the battle of Munda by the number of its cohorts. These were usually arrayed on the battlefield in ten *ordines* or lines, so that the army formed 50 or 60 ranks of men. (Exceptionally, Caesar at Pharsalus arrayed his cohorts in five lines.) The distance observed between the *ordines* in Caesar’s time was about 65m (71 yards).

Each legion had ten cohorts, sub-divided into 30 maniples and 60 centuries. The legion’s first cohort, double the strength of the others and made up of picked men (*electi milites*, Caes., *BC* III, 91) carried the legion’s eagle standard and was commanded by its senior centurion (*centurio primipilus*). Since the first known mention of this doubled strength is found in a passage of Caesar’s *De Bello Gallico*, it is highly possible that he himself instituted the practice. Each of the cohort’s three maniples was sub-divided into two centuries (*centuriae*), but in the sources we sometimes find either five or six *centuriae* in a *cohors*. The total number of soldiers in the conventional *legio* was 4,200 men, but this might on occasion vary between a maximum of 5,000 and a minimum of 1,000.

A EARLY GALLIC WAR, 58–57 BC



(1) *Miles of Legio VII;* battle of Bibracte, 58 BC

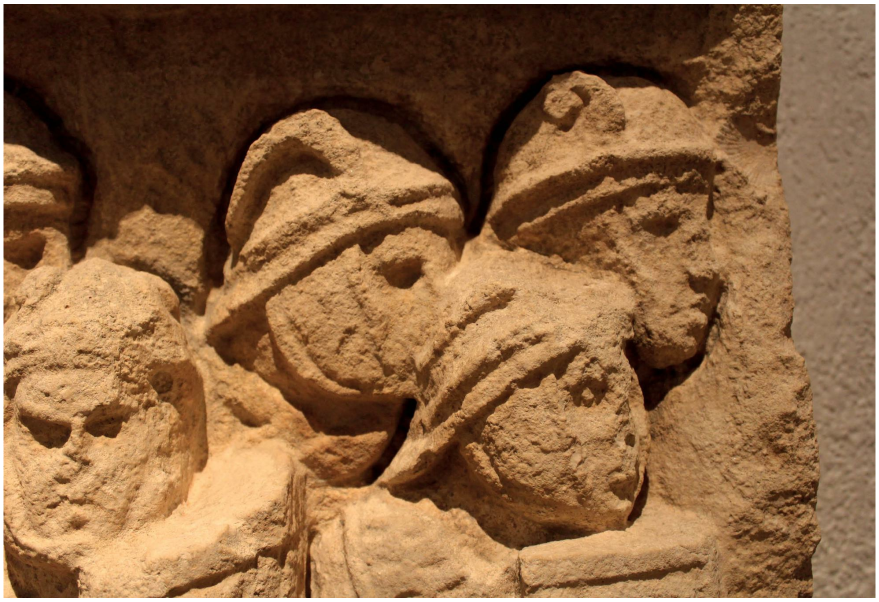
Iconographic sources attest that Hellenistic models of helmet were not reserved to officers. Over a *subarmalis* fitted with *pteryges,* which also protect his neck, this common soldier *(miles gregarius)* in battle order is wearing body armour of a thick leather corselet or *corium*, which we copy from the Aquileia reliefs, and a *manica* protecting his right arm, taken from a bas-relief at Sora (see **Church of Saint Domenico at Sora**). His shield *(scutum)* is of trapezoidal shape, with an *umbo* typical of the period fastened with four rivets; the decorative motif is copied from a bas-relief found at Glanum in France, dated to the end of the Consular period. On the right side of his belt, which at this date is still very simple, is suspended his *gladius*, here based on the Delos example from the Cyclades. His *pilum* is reconstructed from a specimen found in Valencia, Spain.

(2) Cretan *sagittarius*; combat of the Miette, 57 BC

The auxiliary archers from Crete are mentioned early in the Gallic War, but Caesar does not write about them thereafter. They and Caesar's Balearic slingers reportedly played an important part in repulsing Belgae attacking across this swampy stream in an early stage of the battle of the Sabis. This archer wears a white felt *pilos* cap, and a simple tunic under a leather doublet. His weapon is a powerful composite bow with double curvature; the single-barbed iron arrowhead is typically Gallic, since Caesar's army mainly supplied itself from the country. The motif on the small shield is reconstructed after the Chaironides stele from Lyttos in Crete (see **The stele of Chaironides from Lyttos, Crete**).

(3) *Signifer cohortalis*, Legio XII; battle of the Sabis, 57 BC

This reconstruction is inspired by a coin minted for a Gallic chieftain allied to Caesar – Apasnactos, of the Arverni tribe (and thus a compatriot of the rebel leader Vercingetorix). The *signum* visible on the coin identifies the subject as a Roman soldier; note the *phalerae* and the tuft attached to the pole. On the coin the *signifer* also holds a polearm, which is probably a Gallic 'standard-spear'; we reconstruct it from a find at Alesia. We interpret his armour as a short metallic cuirass and greaves, and we copy the crested *cassis* from a helmet formerly in the Axel Guttmann Collection. Hanging at his left hip from a baldric faced with plates, his sword is reconstructed from an example discovered in the Ljubljanica river in present-day Slovenia. In this battle on the Sambre river, some of Caesar's troops were so taken by surprise by one Belgic attack that they had no time to take the leather marching-covers *(tegimenta)* off their shields.



Detail of the previous stele from Glanum. Note that these helmets show a raised rib all around the skull just above a continuous brim, recalling the Celtic Agen typology. Note too the suggestion of side-feathers (right), which some historians have associated with the Fifth Legion's nickname of Alaudae, 'the Larks'.
Incidentally, the Celtic soldiers of this Gallic unit distinguished themselves in action against elephants at Munda in 45 BC. According to Appian (*Civil War*, II, 96): 'Caesar's army began to be alarmed, and a tumult broke out among them...War against elephants, to which they were unaccustomed... frightened them. But... Juba ... started for home at once with his army, leaving only 30 of his elephants... Thereupon Caesar's men plucked up courage to such a degree that the Fifth Legion begged to be drawn up opposite the elephants, and it overcame them valiantly. From that day to the present [first half 2nd century AD] this legion has borne the figure of an elephant on its standards.' In a later passage Appian states that the elephant became a symbol of Caesar's family, and was given to a new unit that he created. (Musée Gallo-Romain de Lyon; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

After the reforms of Marius in about 107 BC, the levy for the citizen legions was no longer limited to the various propertied classes but was based upon the total *capite censi* ('heads counted'), i.e. it was extended to include the very poorest citizens. A new method of voluntary recruitment also provided for continuous service in addition to the former seasonal levies, and introduced the concept of a permanent and professional army. The detailed progress of this transition is still a matter for study, and during our period armies probably combined both levied and voluntary elements. In Caesar's time this reform was extended to all consular armies. The levy system was of two types: the *dilectus,* the annual levy by a consul for his four legions; and the *tumultus*, an extraordinary levy in emergencies. Caesar regularly ignored this distinction, and thus his army increased from four to ten or 12 legions.

Once the legions were created as a permanent military force, each received a number. Caesar's legions in the Gallic War were numbered I, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIIII and XV. In addition to the Roman legions numbered from one to ten, Legio XI (later XI Claudia) was recruited in March 58 BC at Mediolanum (Milan) in Gallia Cisalpina (*BG* I, 10; I, 25; VIII, 8); the same was true for Legiones XII (later XII Fulminata), XIII (the future XIII Gemina – *BG* II, 2), and XIIII (later XIIII Gemina). All these legions were recruited to provide extra reinforcements for Caesar's operations in 'Gallia Comata' (i.e. 'long-haired' or free Gaul) in 58–57 BC. Later, Legio XV (the future XV Apollinaris) was recruited in Gallia Cisalpina in January–February 53 BC by C. Antistius Reginus, M. Junius Silvanus and Titus Sextius, Caesar's *legati* in that region (*BG* VI, 1).

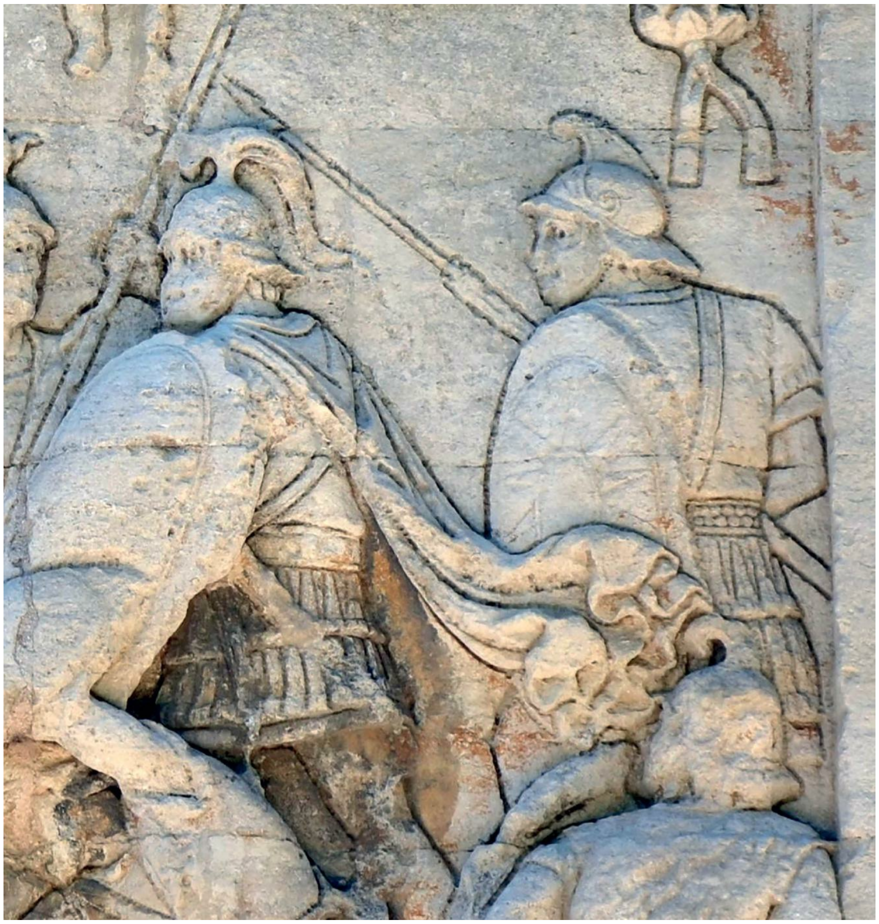
Another 11 legions were added during the Civil War: the Celtic Legio Alaudae raised in Gallia Transalpina (which during the Civil War received the number V), the XXI, XXVI, XXVII, XXX, XXXVI and XXXVIII; plus the three legions of the Eastern Celtic client King Deiotarus from Asia Minor (originally an ally of Pompey, who joined Caesar in 47 BC), and the so-called Legio Vernacula (raised for Pompey in Spain in 49 BC, which Caesar also took into his army). Another 16 legions were raised in 44 BC for a planned war against the Parthians, although in the event this did not take place.

Caesar's *legionarii*

Roman armies of the 1st century BC, following the reforms of Marius, were notably uneven in quality. While the Marian reforms eventually created armies of volunteers, their extremely low pay was insufficient to attract any but the very poorest. (It is noteworthy that Caesar doubled his soldiers' pay before the Civil War.) The wages, and a promised demobilization bonus after long service, were not enough to compensate for the harsh living conditions and the risks of campaigning. This explains the indiscipline often reported among soldiers of the Late Consular period: they were motivated largely by the hunger for booty (*praeda*), and a leader who did not allow looting would soon find his troops unreliable.

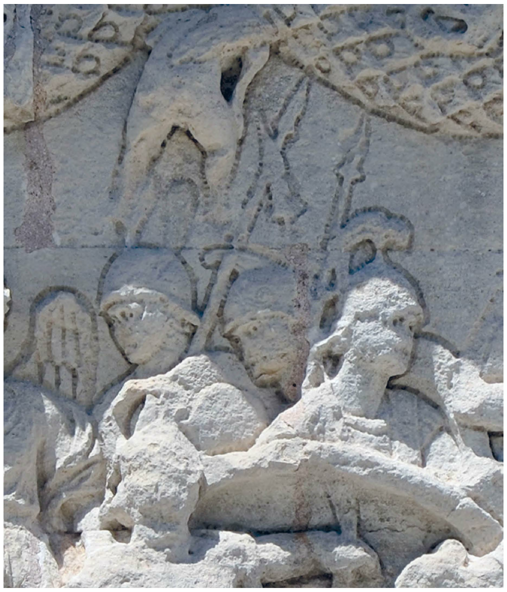
The prospects for looting did not actually shape strategy, but the absence of such opportunities prompted men to desert and seek employment elsewhere. After Marius, Caesar was the only Consular-period general to manage this tricky problem of command and control with real success. The Gallic War did not see the orgy of looting claimed by Plutarch (who states that 800 cities were taken), since Caesar's own commentaries suggest that a maximum of about 160 significant centres were captured. Nevertheless, if calculated in terms of the tens of thousands of captives taken into slavery (from whose sale the soldiers profited), then the booty of the Gallic War was certainly enormous.

At this period soldiers identified with their individual commanders rather than with the state itself; simple patriotism was too limited a motive to be an engine of recruitment even before the Civil War. Many of the soldiers were 'Romans' only in name: the many Italics were citizens of recent date, only accorded that status following the bloody Social War of 91–87 BC. Soldiers levied annually apparently served repeatedly in the same legion, and *esprit de corps* was strong only in long-service units, in whose ranks generals could count on veterans to motivate and train recruits. These veterans certainly felt loyalty to their general, if – like Caesar and Marcus Antonius – he knew how to please them, and to address them in language to which they responded. The *milites legionis* appreciated commanders and officers who shared the hardship of their lives on campaign. They expected their general to enrich them through *donativa* (periodic bonuses: for example, in 61 BC Pompey gave his troops 1,500 *drachma*), and by giving land grants to demobilized veterans, thus forming *colonia* communities of ex-soldiers (though the high cost of such grants was beyond the resources of most generals).



Roman *milites* from the 1st-century BC Julii Mausoleum at Saint-Remy-de-Provence (Glanum). On this monument the details of helmets, spears and even belts reveal the precision of Roman sculptors in representing Caesar’s soldiers and their enemies. Note the left-hand man’s tall-crested ‘Buggenum’ helmet of the Italic Montefortino typology, and on the right a Hellenistic so-called ‘Askalon’ type. Note too the careful depiction of the shank-and-shaft junction of the *pilum* held by the latter. The device of the *sidus Julium* – Julius Caesar’s ‘lucky star’ – also seems to be visible on this man’s round shield; his Greek accoutrements perhaps suggest that he serves with the Legio Deiotariana (see **Plate F1**). His studded belt is identical to that on the famous carving of the ‘Vachères warrior’ of the early Principate, while his comrade on the left wears a plated *cingulum*. (*in situ*, Saint-Remy-de-Provence; author’s photo)

From their standpoint, patrician commanders were seeking to build the numbers of their loyal followers (*clientes*) – a central feature of society throughout Roman history. While ensuring the discipline required in any successful army, the general could not be too rigid. He should spare his men any hardship that he reasonably could, feed them properly, and not overload them with labour. He should treat them as fellow-citizens and show that he valued their qualities as soldiers, rewarding them with fine-quality weapons and choosing the best fighters to form his bodyguard. He had to set a personal example, including in combat (for instance, at Munda, where Caesar led from the front of his Legio X in the right wing). He must fund and attend the funeral ceremonies for his dead, and encourage the troops by piously consulting (and skilfully interpreting) the auguries. Caesar demonstrated all these attributes of a successful commander. He never forgot that it was not only personal magnetism that drew soldiers to a commander, but also their material interests. When the Civil War broke out, the western clients of Pompey – also a charismatic general – came over to Caesar's side for the benefits that he offered.

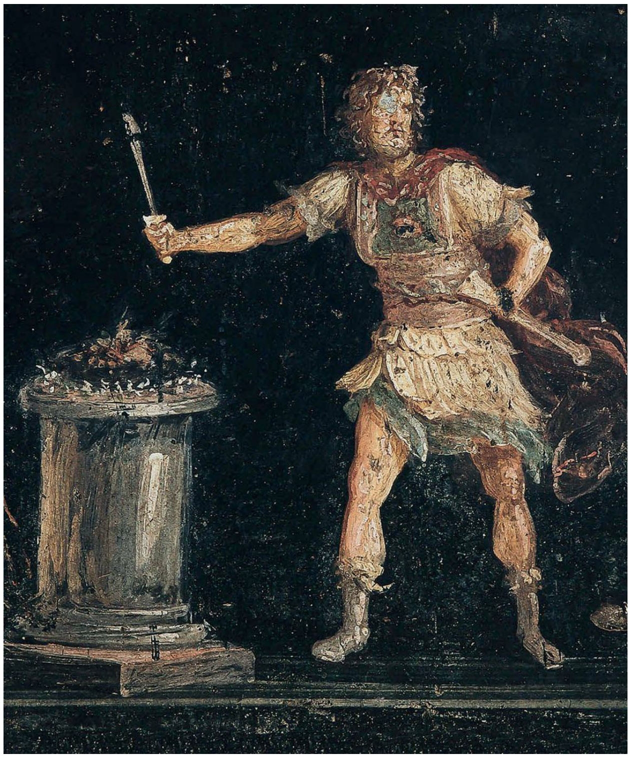


Another detail of Roman soldiers from the Julii Mausoleum. This more weathered sculpture still clearly differentiates three main types of helmet worn by Caesar's legionaries: (left to right foreground) the Coolus-Mannheim, the Hellenic 'Askalon', and the 'Buggenum' complete with a horsehair plume. (*in situ*, Saint-Remy-de-Provence; author's photo)

Equites

As the term *equites* suggests, in former times the cavalry was synonymous with the 'knightly' social class, but from the 2nd century BC onwards shortage of manpower led to the inclusion of recruits from Class I of the commoners, who could afford horses.

The backbone of Caesar's army was the heavy infantry, and the cavalry was purely a support element. From his army of about 22,000 men at Pharsalus, only 1,000 were cavalry. In former times 300 cavalrymen had been incorporated in each legion. Although this *equitatus* legionary cavalry is hardly mentioned as such in Caesar's texts, it is hard to believe that a citizen cavalry did not still exist at least as a small nucleus. In 58 BC, when Caesar needed a mounted escort for a parley with the German king Ariovistus, he instructed Gallic auxiliary cavalrymen under his command to lend their horses to men of Legio X, which thereafter acquired the nickname 'Equestris'. Even so, this incident leaves open the possibility that a Roman cavalry still existed, but was not large enough to satisfy the needs of the moment. We read (*BG* I, 53) that in the same campaign against Ariovistus, when the captured Valerius Procillus was being dragged away in chains, he was rescued by Caesar himself as he pursued the enemy with the cavalry *(equitatu insequentem).* This expression must refer to legionary horsemen, because on that occasion Caesar had no Germanic cavalry.



Detail of 'Sacrifice of Iphigenia' fresco from the 'House of the Vettii', Pompeii. This image of an officer seems be the coloured parallel of the so-called tribune carved on the 'Altar of Ahenobarbus' from the temple of Neptune in Rome, which has been dated to *c.*115 BC. The fresco shows an identical tunic, painted light blue; an identical officer's short *parazonium* sword and scabbard, painted yellow and white (probably representing gold and ivory); and an identical *paludamentum* cloak, painted crimson. The armour is also the same, with the main torso painted in gold colour and the upper panel, with a centred *gorgoneion*, painted blue. Again as on the altar, the *subarmalis* has two ranges of *pteryges,* painted off-white, and the only difference is the presence of white-coloured *cothurni* boots. (Photo courtesy Prof Livio Zerbini)

Generally, however, most cavalry duties in the Gallic and Civil wars were performed by the foreign *socii* auxiliaries: Gauls, Germanics, Spaniards and Numidians. The tactical cavalry unit was the *ala* of 300–400 men, under the command of a *praefectus equitum* of their own nationality or a Roman of senatorial class. Each *ala* was divided into a number of *turmae* of 33 men each commanded by a *decurio,* also often a Roman.

Caesar’s bodyguards

During the Civil War special cohorts were formed from re-enlisted veterans, called *evocati*. At Pharsalus, 2,000 of them fought under their own commander, the *praefectus evocatorum*. Other generals had similar veteran bodyguards, who rode on horseback when the army was on the march but dismounted to fight on foot. Many bodyguard units *(cohortes praetoriae)* were also raised from foreign soldiers; in Gaul Caesar had a 400-strong Germanic cavalry bodyguard, and 2,000 Iberians in Rome in 44 BC.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

The Late Consular rank system had nothing in common with a modern professional military hierarchy. It was rooted in the tradition of an annually-raised militia led by elected magistrates holding civic appointments, and for decades after the reforms of Marius the status and career path of those who led the legions did not change. For instance, Cicero gives us very little information about any material rewards they received; it seems that legates and tribunes served without payment, although sharing in the profits from war booty.

After the commander-in-chief, the senior rank hierarchy followed the top-down order *legati*, *praefecti, quaestores*, *tribuni* and *contubernales*. At the beginning of the Gallic War the majority of these 'officers' were not professional soldiers, but men from Rome's wealthiest classes who undertook periods of military service alternating with civic appointments during their progress up the political hierarchy (the *cursus honorum*). However, the equestrian gentry of metropolitan Rome and provincial Italy did provide some career officers. They rarely progressed above the rank of tribune, and more often supplied cadres of directly appointed centurions (see below).

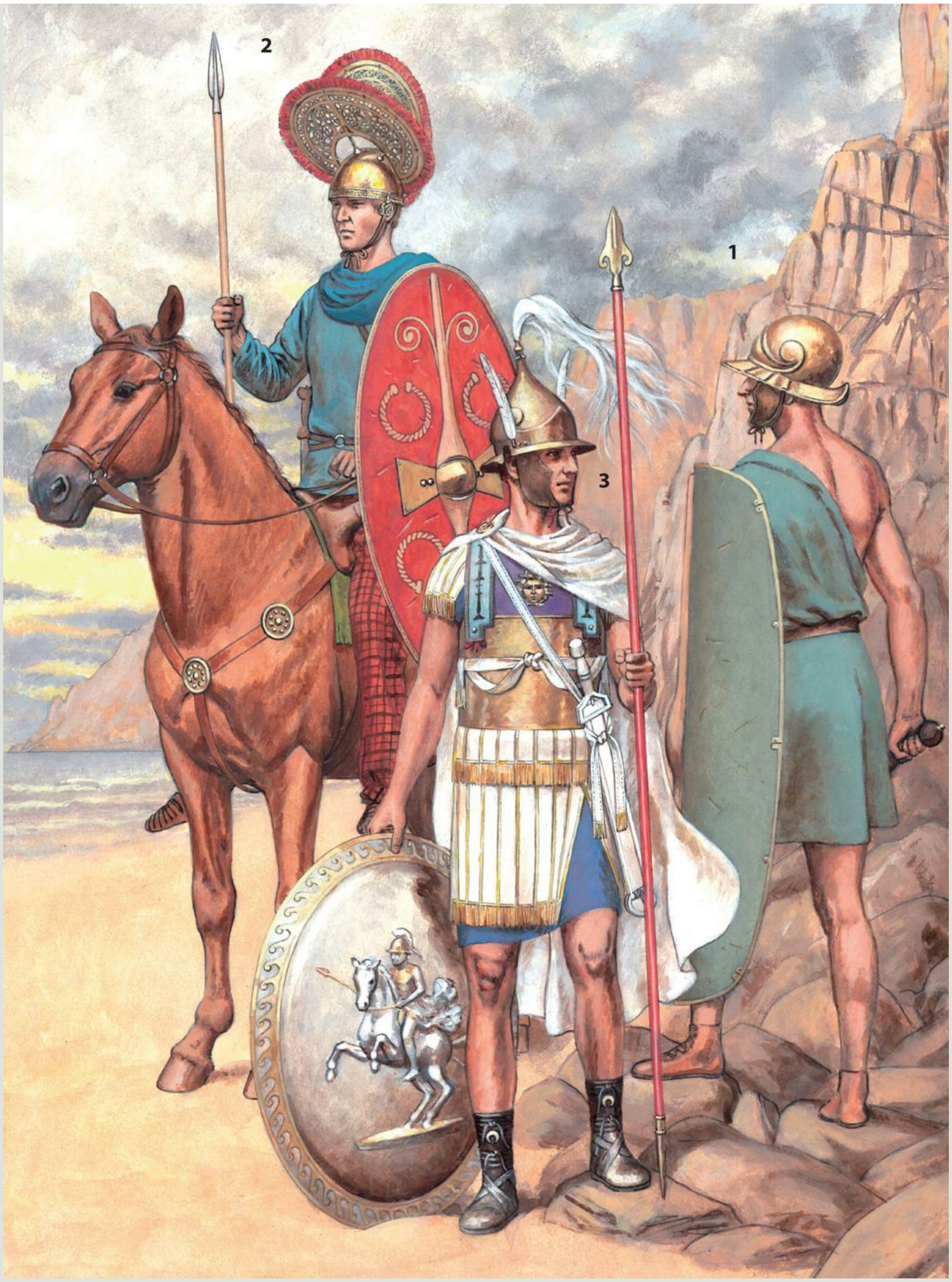
Bronze Medusa appliqué, late 1st century BC; the eyes were originally inset with contrasting precious material. The dimensions fit well with a possible cuirass *gorgoneion.* (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Este; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

Legati

The *legati* ('delegated' men) were conventionally drawn from the senatorial social class (but see below), and were appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of the consul or commander-in-chief. In the absence of the latter a legate might deputize for him, in the appointment of *legatus pro praetore*, like Caesar's famous Titus Labienus. A single legion might be commanded by a *legatus* (Caes., *BG* I, 52; II, 20; *BC* III, 62; V, 1, 24–25), but in Caesar's time and even before that a legate might command a force of several legions; Cicero mentions four legates each commanding two legions. The legates might have more military experience and knowledge than a particular consul or governor.

We know the names of 21 *legati* in the army of Gaul; only some of these belonged to famous *gentes* (unlike those of Pompey, who formed a more aristocratic staff). This was probably both because Caesar did not want his legates to be illustrious personalities who might deflect glory from himself, and because he valued energy and tactical skill, which were rare among the upper aristocracy. Among his equestrian subordinates Caesar's senior legate and trusted deputy was Titus Labienus, who distinguished himself at the battle of the Sabis and proved talented in independent commands. Quintus Titurius Sabinus was successful in Armorica, defeating the army led by Vindovix in 56 BC, but led his command to disaster at the hands of the treacherous Ambiorix's Eburones two years later. Caesar was negative in his judgements of Servius Sulpicius Galba (legate of Legio XII in 57 BC), and of Quintus Tullius Cicero (the orator's brother, appointed for political reasons).

B GALLIA & BRITANNIA, 56–54 BC



(1) Roman marine; Armorica, 56 BC

This *classiarius,* imagined during naval operations against the Venetii off Brittany, is reconstructed from several contemporary bas-reliefs, including one in Narbonne. Etruscan urns of the 1st century BC also represent sailors with notably lighter equipment than legionaries, since they needed to be agile and unencumbered in enclosed spaces; clothing includes *piloi* felt caps and padded or quilted garments. Figurative monuments of the Late Consular period show marines wearing helmets of Italic or, as here, Hellenistic typology, clad in simple tunics and carrying oblong *scuta* shields and spears. This equipment was presumably stowed on board until needed, with the shields hung in horizontal ranges to protect the oarsmen. This marine infantryman has no body armour, but only a tunic worn in off-the-shoulder style *(exomis),* which allows comfortable movement of the right arm. Plautus and Vegetius both indicate that it was blue-green in colour, and blue shields are visible in naval frescoes from Pompeii and Stabiae. He has taken his sword from the ship's arsenal just before the fight, so is not cluttered by a scabbard. Specific naval *signa* are recorded by the sources (Prop., *El.,* IV, 24).

(2) Celtic auxiliary cavalryman; Britannia, 54 BC

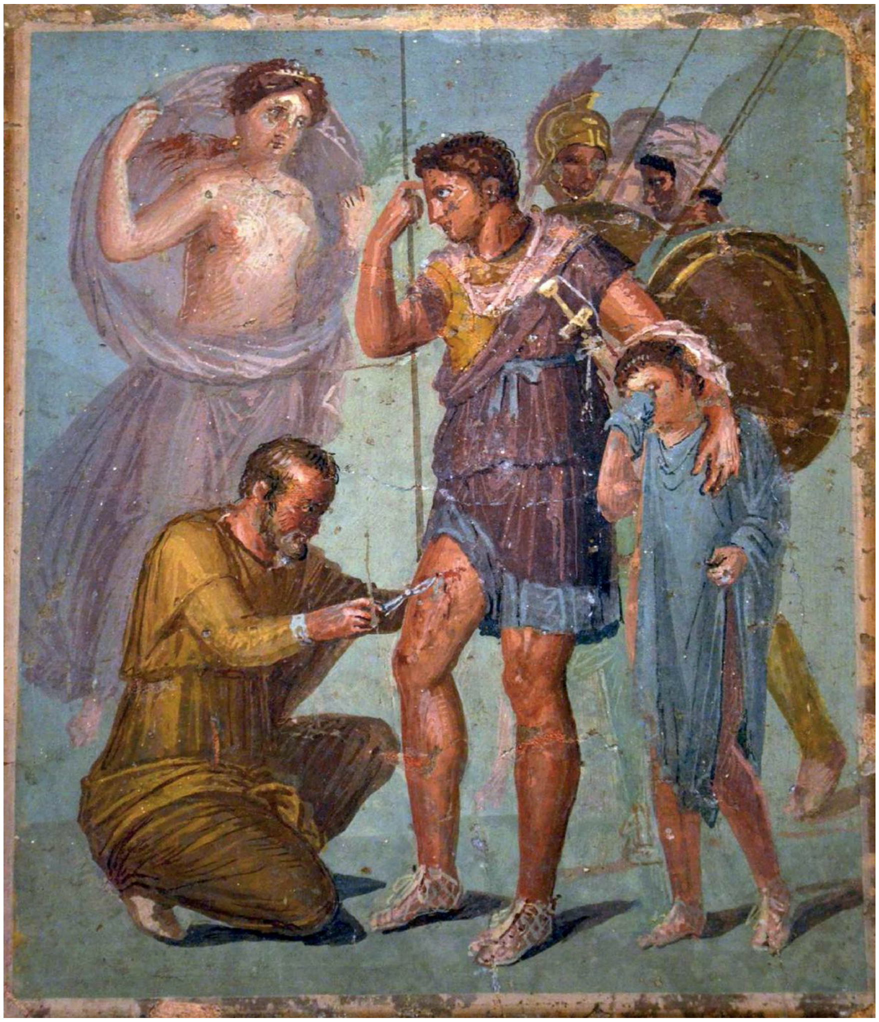
Caesar's cavalry was largely made up of allied Gauls. In recent years a warrior grave which may be identified with one of them was excavated at North Bersted in West Sussex, southern England. This 'mystery warrior's' very spectacular bronze helmet indicates that he was a wealthy nobleman and presumaby an officer of auxiliaries. The basic Coolus-Mannheim skull is surmounted by two perpendicular metal crests in fine openwork (see photos of **Equipment of *Socii* Auxiliaries**), and we reconstruct the crest-holders with added horsehair. The grave also yielded a bronze 'butterfly' shield boss (possibly for a flat *parma*), a long Celtic sword (deliberately bent almost double, as so often with such finds), and a spearhead. We reconstruct a shield blazon from one on the Arch of Arausius at Orange, southern France. His clothes are shown as typically Gallic, with chequered patterns; blue tints also seem to have been widespread. Caesar writes that the wearing of the cloak in Roman fashion, fastened at the right shoulder, was a recognition sign for his Gallic allies (*BG* VII, 50). The saddle, with four horns to give stability in the absence of stirrups, was an invention of the Celts which the Romans adopted and developed.

(3) Roman *legatus*
This reconstruction is largely inspired by a famous fresco from Pompeii. The legate displays signs of his senatorial social class, including the black *calcei patricii* boots decorated with crescent moons. His helmet is a Hellenic model adorned with a plume and white feathers, and his cuirass is in gilt metal. Around it is tied a fabric sash, the *zona militaris* or ‘knot of Hercules’; the colour of this may indicate his rank, as does his white *paludamentum* (Caes., *BA* I, VII, 5). The senior officers’ sword is a short *parazonium* with an ivory hilt. His metal *clipeus* shield is decorated with a Dioscuri motif, after a bas-relief from the altar in the Theatre of Marcellus in Rome. The spear he holds, a *hasta summa imperii*, was a distinctive symbol of commanders.

Praefecti

We know little about the service of prefects in the first half of the 1st century BC, beyond the fact that they played no part in leading the citizen heavy infantry. They were no doubt chosen by commanders-in-chief, and their main function was that of *praefectura equitum*. They are rarely mentioned in the *BG*, for the above-mentioned reason that the sources for a permanent Roman cavalry in this period are hard to understand. The texts suggest that these were not men of particular importance (which was even more true of the prefects of fleets, *praefecti classiarum*, a military arm totally neglected at the time). Cicero (*ad Fam*., III, 6, 5) speaks of a *praefectus evocatorum* (see above).

Other prefects fulfilled specific functions, dealing mainly with administrative or logistical tasks. For instance, a *praefectus oppidum* commanded a stronghold (Sall., *Bel. Iug*., LXVI, 3; LXVII, 3; LXIX, 4). The *praefectus fabrum* is first mentioned in 115 BC, but mainly emerges as an important figure during *c.* 60–30 BC. Although the sources do not support it, some historians characterize them as chief engineers, but others simply as a general’s orderly officers. According to Cicero’s correspondence, such an officer might be an aide-de-camp sent to convey a commander’s instructions. They were probably family clients chosen to serve in the entourage of a commander or legate.



The wounded Aeneas, in a 1st-century AD fresco from the *triclinium* of the ‘House of Siriacus’, Pompeii (Regio VII, 1. 25). In this famous painting of a military doctor treating Aeneas’s wounds, the figure at top right clearly has a white cap as worn under a helmet; the inside and cheek-guards of all helmets also required leather or felt linings. Note also the low *caligae* sandals, and the purple tunic worn as an *epano-statos* (i.e. over the muscled armour), here in the *exomis* style leaving the right shoulder bare. (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples; author’s photo, courtesy of the Museum)

Quaestores

Sometimes a force might be led by a *quaestor* (‘investigator’ or auditor), who in that case was appointed *quaestor pro praetore*. While this was a junior civic post, in the military context it was a more senior position, in direct contact with the general. In Gaul quaestors commanded legions, or more, and organized the winter camps. They might be close relatives of a general, chosen arbitrarily, but more often by lot. Marcus Antonius commanded legionary forces in Gaul before becoming a *quaestor*.

Tribuni and *contubernales*

Military tribunes (*tribuni militum*) might be chosen from among the 24 *tribuni a populo* elected by the Roman citizenry, or might be directly appointed by the consul (*tribuni militum rufuli*). They might be of either senatorial (*laticlavii*) or equestrian (*augusticlavii*) social rank (distinguished by wide or narrow purple edging-stripes on their togas and tunics). The latter class provided the majority, since soldiering was a career in which only a minority of the senatorial families retained any interest. Usually six (but sometimes as many as ten) tribunes alternated in the nominal command of a *legio*, each pair for one or more days at a time, which suggests the modern concept of 'duty officers'. They were not highly valued by Caesar, who characterized them as being more interested in advancing their political careers than in soldiering. However, in the 1st century BC the sources show that they were often entrusted with important missions and responsibilities.

Even 24 'tribunes of the people' would not have been enough to provide for the needs of an entire army. Writing of the defeat of G. Valerius Triarius by Mithridates VI of Pontus at the first battle of Zéla in 67 BC, Plutarch (*Lucul.,* XXXV, 1) and Appian (*Mithr*., XIII, 89) mention that 24 tribunes were killed. Since that Roman army was composed of three legions, we may therefore deduce at least eight tribunes per legion (though of course, not all of those present who held this rank necessarily perished on that occasion). There must therefore have been a reserve of officers holding this rank at the disposal of a commander-in-chief, and it is quite possible that a tribune was placed at the head of each cohort. Probably these spare or supernumerary officers are the *contubernales* (literally, 'companions') of whom Caesar writes on the eve of the battle against Ariovistus, when he mocks these privileged youths for their lack of spirit.

In Polybius' time (*c.*150 BC), it took between five and ten years of service in the army to hope to be appointed tribune by promotion, but unfortunately we do not have clear sources for the system in the 1st century BC. In the time of Sulla (*c.*104 BC) tribunes were still entrusted with legions, but by the end of the Republic they seem to occupy a middle position. They were nevertheless an important element in the command chain, leading battle manoeuvres and acting in close collaboration with the centurions. Under Caesar, tribunes gained in technical skills and formed an important link between the troops and commanders, and the post of tribune could be a starting-point for progress to senior commands.

The *contubernales*, whom Caesar also called *equites Romani* (‘Roman knights’), were members of the staffs of a commander and his legates without specific titles or functions. They were usually aristocratic youths serving a military apprenticeship and aspiring to future promotion, attracted by the general’s reputation or by family alliances. They might be either aristocrats or chosen from among the equestrian gentry. In his youth Caesar himself had been a *contubernalis*, at the siege of Mytilene on Lesbos in 81 BC, when he was decorated with the ‘civic crown’ for saving the life of a comrade. Writing of an episode of panic at Vesontio (Besançon), he suggests that they might initially be men of mediocre value: ‘So great was the panic, and so suddenly did it seize upon all the army, that it seriously affected the intelligence and the courage of all ranks. It began first with the tribunes, the contingent-commanders, and others who had followed Caesar from Rome to court his friendship, without any great experience in warfare’ (*BG* I, 39, 1). However, they presumably became more useful with growing experience.

Centuriones

The most famous category of combat officer in the Roman army was the centurion (*centurio*). While the appointment might be translated loosely as ‘company commander’, there is no modern equivalent of the rank. To denote their relatively lower status, the centurionate are today sometimes wrongly described by scholars as ‘non-commissioned officers’, but this modern term gives a very inexact idea of their place within a society and an army utterly different from those of our own recent centuries.

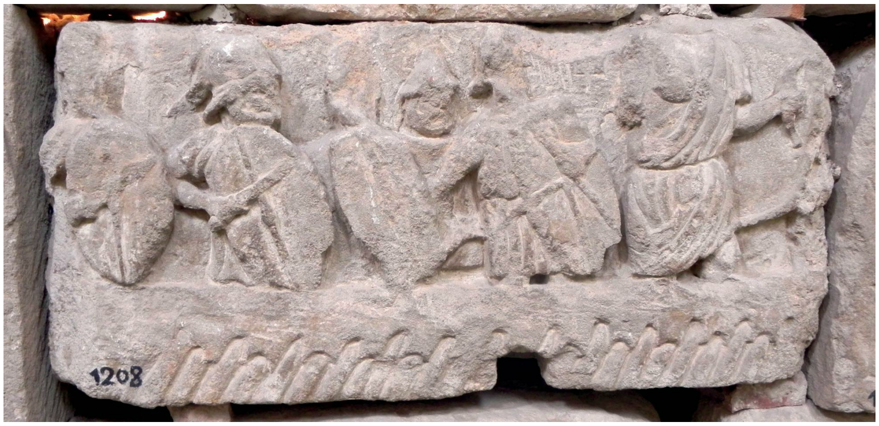
The centurion commanded a single *centuria* of 60–80 men. In the double-century manipular tactical organization, the century on the right in line was commanded by the maniple’s senior or *centurio prior*, and that on the left by its junior *centurio posterior*. Before the reforms of Marius the centurions were usually chosen by commanders from among their bravest men; like the rest of the legion, they were demobilized at the end of a campaign season, but the most deserving no doubt retained their rank over successive years. During the transition to a permanent standing army, service in this rank became a career. As mentioned above, some entered the army by direct appointment, as distinct from promotion from the ranks.

The centurions of a legion were ranked in a complex system according to the seniority of the three old troop-types, in the order *triarii* (or *pili*), *principes* and *hastati*. There were 20 *centuriones* within each of these three categories (in each case, ten *priores* and ten *posteriores*). A centurion's ranking among the maniples making up the cohorts was designated, e.g. *Nonus Pilus Posterioris Centuriae* (ninth centurion of the left century of the *pili*); *Decimus Pilus Prioris Centuriae* (tenth centurion of the right century of the *pili*); *Decimus Pilus Posterioris Centuriae* (tenth centurion of the left century of the *pili*), and so on. The junior centurion in the whole legion was thus termed the *Decimus Hastatus Posterior*, while its senior centurion commanding the first cohort was the *Legio Centurio Prior* or *Primus Pilus* ('First Javelin'). This very experienced soldier led the group of senior centurions (*primi ordines*) who took part in the general's councils of war along with the *legatus* and the *tribuni*. (In times of crisis, as at Vesontio in 58 BC, all the centurions might attend such councils.)

The majority of centurions were still initially promoted from the ranks for bravery, energy and skill-at-arms (*BG* VI, 40, 7), so their social origin was usually humble. The criteria for advancement through the grades within a legion are unclear, but promotion was probably due mainly to the favour of a general – as we see in the episode of Vorenus and Pullo, who competed to distinguish themselves in front of Caesar. Literary sources allow us to surmise that the system of advancement through Cohortes X to I was perhaps instituted by Caesar himself. Exceptionally, however, promotions may sometimes have been sold (Cicero, *pro lege Manilia*, XIII, 37).While ex-ranker centurions were primarily chosen for their talent in delivering violence, promotion to the *primi ordines* must have demanded qualities of intelligence and application. Such men therefore came to form a sort of 'new aristocracy' raised from the working classes, whose duties brought them closer to the officers of the senatorial class. This consciousness of superiority might gradually distance a senior centurion from his former comrades.

Each centurion had a servant (*cacula* or *calo*), and therefore probably a horse, and had his own tent in camp. If we extrapolate the promises of gratuities made by Caesar during the winter of 52/51 BC, it is possible that the pay of his centurions (or perhaps the *primipili* only?) was ten times greater than that of the common soldiers (*BG* VIII, 4, 1): 'Caesar promises his soldiers – as a reward for their labour and patience, in cheerfully submitting to hardships from the severity of the winter, the difficulty of the roads, and the intolerable cold – 200 *sestertii* each, and to every centurion 2,000'. So it is not surprising that Caesar's centurions were prosperous enough to allow them, at the start of the Civil War, to make loans to Caesar (*BC* I, 39, 3).

The centurions exerted themselves in battle without hesitation, providing an example to their men of courage and the spirit of sacrifice. Their relatively small number (660 in an army of 11 legions at the end of the war) made them a homogenous backbone of the army, with strong *esprit de corps* and a consciousness of their own high value. It seems very possible that the experience and solidarity of this class of Caesarean centurions, veterans of the long Gallic War, made the crucial difference during the Civil War, since Pompey's more diverse army did not have a comparably cohesive corps of unit officers.



Frieze representing Roman *milites classiarii* on a bireme warship, mid-1st century BC. Here the marines are equipped only with helmet, shield and sword, and wear the tunic in *exomis* fashion – see **Plate B1**. (Musée Lapidaire, Narbonne, inv. no.1208; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

Other 'non-commissioned' officers

Under the centurions were ranked other senior soldiers collectively termed *principales*, including the standard-bearers (the *aquilifer* and other *signiferi*), and *beneficiarii* officers' orderlies who were among those excused normal daily duties – the so-called *immunes*. Other *principales* were the centurion's chosen deputy (the *optio:* Pol. VI, 24, 2): the *tesserarius,* who received the password written on a tablet (*tessera*) from the tribunes; the *vexillarius*, another standard-bearer for detached bodies of troops; and perhaps the musicians – the *cornicen*, *tubicen* and *buccinator*, though in Caesar's time these may not yet have ranked as *principales*.

A general difficulty for historians is that in this period there was not yet a well-established hierarchy below the centurions, as would be the case under the Empire. The sources are very scarce, although the terms mentioned above are all found before or in Caesar's time. Caesar himself singles out only *aquiliferi* and *signiferi* for special mention. Some historians believe that these standard-bearers were superior in status to the *posterior* centurions. Their duties did not demand the same talent for violence as among the centurions, since the sacred *signa* should not be endangered by men who were too impulsive. Nevertheless, several Gallic War *signiferi* are mentioned as very courageous and ready to sacrifice their lives, in addition to the famous episode of Legio X's eagle-bearer on the British beach. Elsewhere Caesar is less laudatory; for instance, at Dyrrachium in 48 BC their wavering behaviour seems to have contributed to a disorderly retreat.

Socii auxiliaries

After the Social War, from 87 BC Italics (peoples of the whole Italian peninsula) became at least quasi-Roman citizens eligible for enlistment in the legions. It seems to have been following this date that the availability of foreigners to serve under Roman generals as allies (*socii* – 'associates') also increased greatly, with widespread employment of non-citizens for particular campaigns. (In this text we describe them by the English term 'auxiliaries' in its generic sense; the first formal *cohortes auxiliariae* are believed to have been formed by Augustus.) Such allied contingents were commanded by their own leaders or by Roman *praefecti* of equestrian rank. Their numbers varied widely, as did their ethnic composition: we find mention of Celts, who formed the core of the Roman cavalry (Aedui, Narbonenses, Belgae, Cisalpini, Aquitani); Iberians and Balearic slingers; Germanic Suebi and Norici; Illyrians, Ruthenian Celts; Greeks (Cretans, Rhodians, Acarnians, Dolopians and Aetolians), Macedonians and other Hellenized troops; Anatolians and Galatians; Syrian and Iturean archers; Numidians, and Nabateans.

Elephants

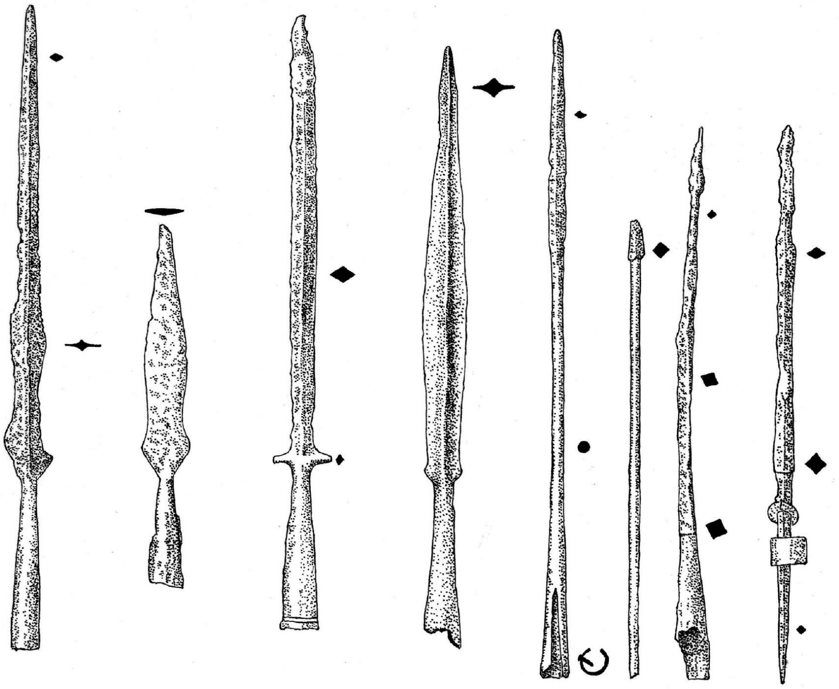
The day of Caesar's African triumph to celebrate his victory at Thapsus saw 40 elephants, arrayed in two lines and carrying torches in their trunks, preceding the Dictator in his march towards the Capitol (Suetonius, *Caes*., XXXVII). The subsequent games in the Circus featured, first, 20 elephants fighting 500 men on foot, and then elephants with turrets on their backs housing three archers, against 500 infantry and 500 horsemen (Pliny, *HN*, VIII, 7; Suetonius, XXXIX). The practice of placing turrets manned by soldiers on the backs of the elephants is also alluded to by Lucretius (*B*. v. 1, 1301) and by Juvenal (*Sat.* XII, 1. 110). This was probably the equipment of the elephants that Caesar prepared for the expedition against the Parthians, and sent to Brundusium harbour to be embarked together with the ten legions and 10,000 cavalrymen already assembled there. Caesar's assassination aborted the planned campaign, and Marcus Antonius inherited his army and his elephants.

ARMS & EQUIPMENT

Shafted weapons: the *pilum*, *gaesum* and *hasta*

The *pilum* was a close-range javelin, consisting of a wooden shaft about 1.5m (59in) long, in which was inserted or to which was attached a thin metal shank usually of rather shorter length. Its weight and small-section head gave it great penetrative power. If it pierced a shield, even if it did not wound the enemy, it would either break at the junction of the shaft and the shank, or the latter would bend so that it could not be withdrawn and thrown back. The encumbered shield would then have to be discarded, and the adversary would be exposed to the sword of the Roman soldier closing on him.

Two types of *pila* are mentioned by Polybius in 146 BC (Pol., VI, 23, 8–11), a stout one and a thin one, and both have been confirmed in the 1st century BC by archaeological specimens. At the battle of Pharsalus Caesar refers to *milites* carrying only one *pilum* instead of two (Caes. *BC* III, 86). He also ordered that the metal shank below the head of heavy *pila* should not be hardened (*BG* I, 25; Appian, *Kelt.*, I: ‘what the Romans called *pila*, four-sided, part wood and part iron, and not hard except at the pointed end’). Porfyrius states that just a light blow could break the *pilum* so that the enemy could not re-use it (Pomp. Porf., *Ad Horat. Sat.*, II, 1–3), but this modification was not universal, since Caesar remembers quick-reacting Gauls throwing *pila* back at his men (*BG* II, 27).



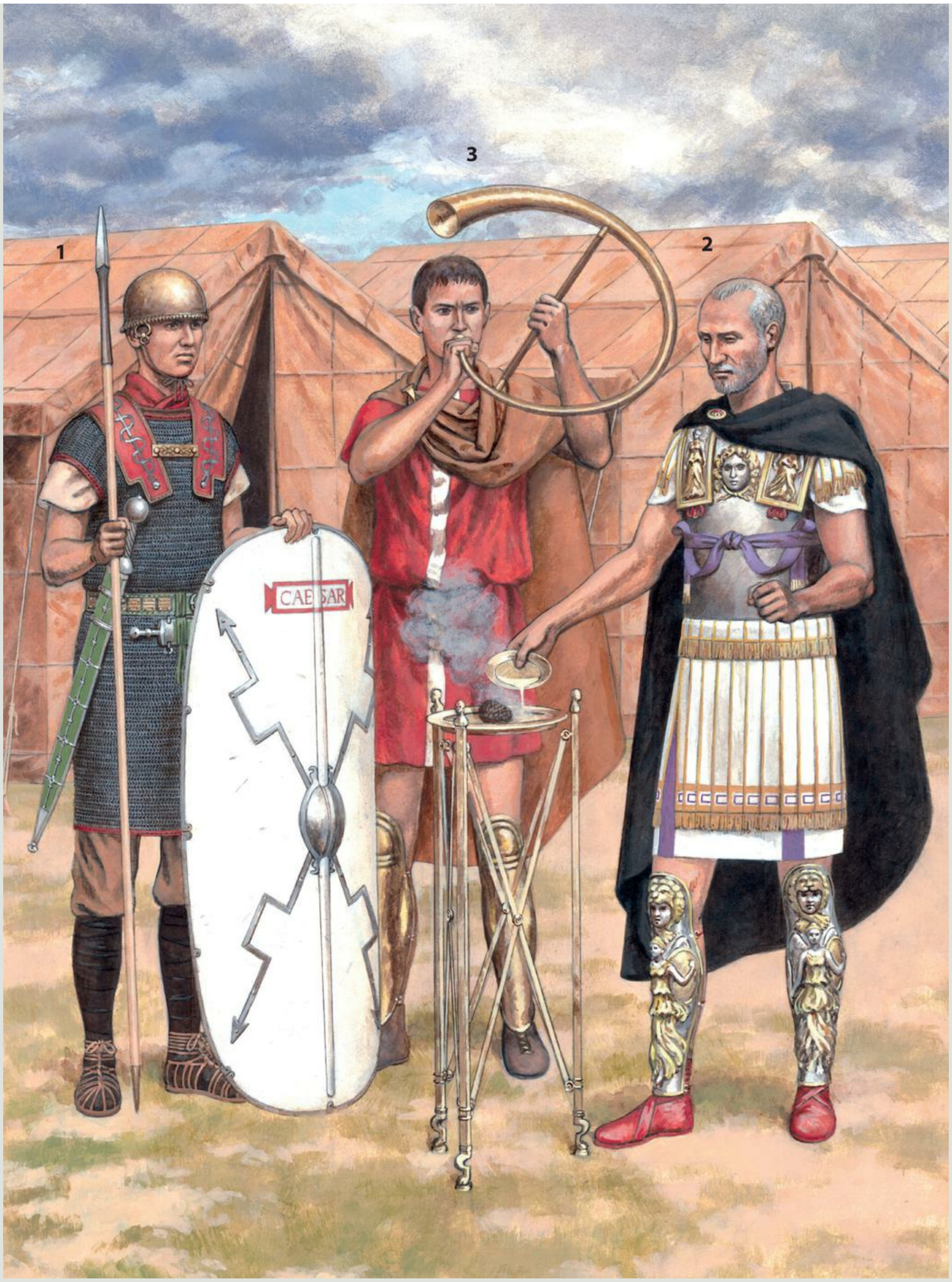
Different Celtic, Germanic and Roman spear and javelin heads, from Alesia in France and from the necropolis of Lamadelaine, Luxembourg. The three on the left are Celtic or Germanic iron heads from Alesia, and the central example is from Lamadelaine; some may be basically hunting weapons repurposed in time of war. The four *pila* on the right are also from Alesia, where both socketed and tanged examples were found. (Drawings by Florent Vincent)

Some *pila* heads *(cuspides)* were originally barbed, but in the Late Consular period they usually had a more penetrative ‘bodkin’ or pyramidal shape. The shank might be of round or quadrilateral section; it might have a socket enclosing the end of the shaft, or a flat tang inserted into a slot in the enlarged end of the shaft and fixed with lateral rivets. It may have been in about Caesar’s time that a collet was also adopted: a round- or square-section metal cap around the base of the shank to further secure the attachment. The use of a long socketed type, quadrangular in section, is attested by two specimens found in Camp C at Alesia, and a complete specimen with a longer leaf-shaped point has been found in Castellum 11. Several other *pila* show a spike tang with a rivet through it, as still visible on some Imperial specimens. The use of both the socketed and the tanged types was maintained, but after the 1st century BC the flat-tanged *pilum* became slimmer, as in the Oberaden specimens of the early Principate, whose prototype is a *pilum* of Alesia type.

This last typology was a sophisticated weapon with a very thin, round-section iron shank measuring between 17cm and 50cm (6.7–19.7in), having a rhomboid-section point. The thickened end of the shaft might be conical or quadrilateral in shape, and the shank was inserted by means of a flat tang secured by two (later three) lateral rivets. At the butt end the shaft was pierced laterally by a nail securing a round or squared ferrule. This kind of weapon is represented on the Glanum monument at Saint-Remy, and seems to have been developed at the end of the Gallic War. A well preserved example was recovered from the Saone at Ouroux. It is 76.5cm (30.15in) long, characterized by a long point of square section 15.3cm (6in) long, 10mm (0.39in) wide at the base, and a slightly faceted shank 8mm (0.31in) in diameter. The squared tang is 25.8cm (10in) long and pierced by an oval hole for a wooden dowel.

Shorter socketed *pila* with shanks and heads measuring only about 15cm (6in) have been found at Alesia in Gaul and at Urso (Osuna) in Spain. Caesar mentions the so-called *pila muralia*, used by defenders to beat off an enemy attack (Caes., *BG* V, 40). These were obviously a short-range weapon thrown or used to strike downwards; we may suspect the re-use of broken weapons repurposed.

C BRITANNIA & LATE GALLIC WAR, 55–52 BC



(1) *Miles of Legio* X; Britannia, 55 BC

The Tenth Legion was Caesar’s favourite formation, and, for his bravery, our soldier has received precious weapons from the hands of his general. His highly decorated sword is reconstructed from scabbard fragments discovered at Pitre in northern Gallia.

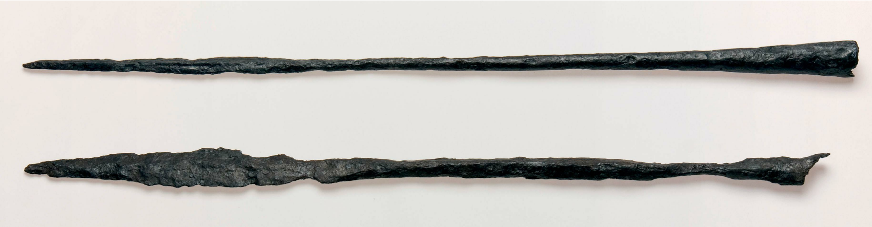
The dagger *(pugio)* is rare in Caesarean archaeological contexts, and was perhaps reserved to junior officers and elite soldiers. Here it is worn horizontally as on the stele of the centurion Minucius T.F. Lorarius of Legio III Martia, now in the Civic Museum, Padua. His helmet is a Coolus-Mannheim model recovered at Vieille-Toulouse, southern France, with small metal cheek-rings connected by leather laces. The shoulder-guards of his ringmail *gallica* are made of leather with silvered fittings, and are united by a decorated fastener on his chest, as shown on the Altar of Ahenobarbus now in the Louvre, Paris. The white-coloured shield is visible in a Palestrina mosaic. It was common to write a general's name on the shield (especially during civil wars). The javelin head is from finds at Alesia.

(2) *Proconsul* Gaius Julius Caesar in mourning dress, 54 BC

Caesar is depicted in mourning for his daughter Julia, married to Pompey the Great, who died in August 54 BC. To perform a sacrifice inside the camp he is wearing a black mourning cloak, has removed his rings and other jewellery, and is unshaven. On such occasions senators dressed as members of the equestrian class (see tunic), and equestrians wore plebeian dress. Caesar's armour, and greaves decorated with Victories, are copied from a monument from the first half of the 1st century BC. The purple belt indicates his rank as proconsul and general-in-chief of the army of Gaul. Caesar usually wore red *calcei* – the shoes of the ancient kings of Alba, from whom he claimed descent.

(3) *Cornicen*, 52 BC

Several murals from the Late Consular period show both *lictores* and musicians with red tunics decorated with a centred white vertical *clavus.* His only protection is a pair of greaves, and he carries no weapons; at this period military musicians were not yet 'non-commissioned officers'. His *cornu* horn is copied from a famous stele from Osuna in Spain, which dates from the time of the Civil War.



Two socketed Roman *pilum*-heads and shanks from Alesia, 52 BC; note the differing sizes and shapes of the heads. The climactic battlefield of the Gallic War has been fundamental for our understanding of the kinds of shafted weapons used in the 1st century BC, yielding such large numbers of spears and javelins that they were clearly the main weapons used by both armies. Some 40 fragmentary *pila* have been recovered at Alesia, including comparable numbers of socketed and tanged examples, some with barbed pyramidal heads. The preserved iron fragments vary between 25cm and 70cm (10 and 27.5in) in length. (Musée Alésia; Conseil Départemental de la Côte-d'Or, fonds Société des Sciences de Semur; photo François Perrodin)

The *gaesum*, a javelin of Celtic origin, can also be seen employed by Late Consular soldiers on the Julii Mausoleum at Glanum. Antonucci suggests that it was especially used by troops of Celtic origin, as part of their own familiar armament. It was a heavy javelin originally forged entirely from iron and also known by the Romans as a *soliferrum,* about 1.40m (55in) long. Like the *pilum*, it inflicted terrible wounds, but might bend if it struck a shield. The Romans kept the shape of the head, but changed its iron shaft to wood.

Heavy javelins with 'winged' heads, and used especially by soldiers when hunting (in the later term, 'boar-spears'), were already seen in the Late Consular period, as represented in a fresco of the late 1st century BC from Herculaneum.

The long thrusting spear *(hasta longa)* could be used in a 'phalanx' formation, and is archaeologically well attested by iron heads from Alesia and Osuna. These have an average length of about 10cm (3.9in) and rhomboid or leaf-shaped points, with a cylindrical shaft. Since they were stabbing weapons, many of them have a medial groove. The Alesia excavations also revealed the butts of spears; we should remember that shafted weapons were often re-used by enemies, and it is therefore difficult to distinguish between Roman and Celtic weapons found on battlefields.

Swords

After throwing his *pila*, the Roman legionary charged with sword in hand. This *gladius* was the standard weapon of the *miles,* showing little change from the Consular period until well into the 2nd century AD, and was a symbol of the military *imperium* and the military virtues.

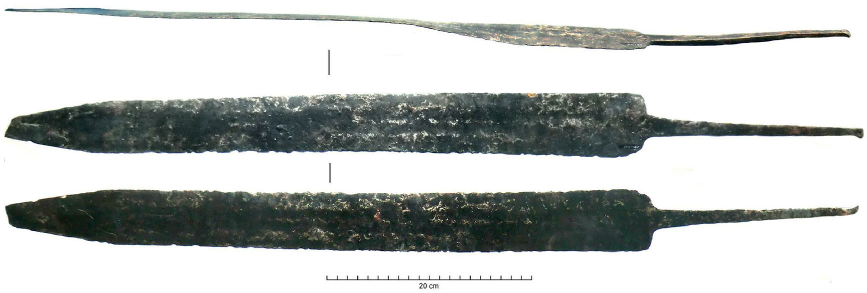
The so-called *gladius hispaniensis,* inspired by a combination of Iberian prototypes with Italic traditions, was a double-edged weapon used both for cutting and especially for thrusting when in dense fighting formations, a technique in which the *milites* were particularly trained. The main characteristic of the original Iberian sword, according to a medieval lexicon attributed to Suda, was essentially the pattern-welding of the blade *(lamna)*, forged in several hard layers of steel (Suda/Suidas, s.v. *machaira*, mu 302 in Adler edition).

The best-known specimen of approximately our period, complete with its metal-framed scabbard of leather-covered wood, comes from Delos in the Greek Cyclades archipelago, and is dated to about 69 BC. It is the precursor of the classic Mainz typology of the early Imperial period, but is about 4cm longer, having an overall length of 76cm (30in) and a blade length of just over 60cm (23.6in); it lacks a pronounced midrib, and has a wooden hilt covered with bronze fittings. More than 20 similar specimens have been found in Gallia, including one from Mouriés. Other swords found in the Alpine crescent, like the examples from Boyer and Gué de l'Epine, are very similar to that from Mouriés, as are the variously dated specimens from Giubiasco in Switzerland and Berry-Bouy near Bourges.

The Boyer sword (58–20 BC) presents a 67.2cm.(26.3in) blade whose edges curve inwards below the hilt but broaden again midway down before narrowing again to the point. This characteristic 'waisted' shape can be seen to a greater or lesser extent in many specimens from the Late Consular period, e.g. those from Giubiasco and Nidau. At least two very sharply pointed blades and a scabbard of *gladii hispanienses* have been found at Alesia. The Osuna sword dates to the time of Caesar's campaigns in Spain; its slightly waisted blade with sloped shoulders narrows to 5cm and broadens to 6cm (1.96–2.36in). Peter Connolly, considering that the narrowing towards the point should begin 45cm (17.7in) from the shoulders, suggests a point 19–20cm long (7.48–7.87in), and a total length of 64–65cm (25.2–25.6in). This matches a sword found in the Saône river which some authors date to the Caesarean period.

Two very important specimens from Sisak and Kupa in the Balkans are preserved in the Museum of Zagreb, Croatia. One has an elongated, almost completely preserved blade, about 5cm broad at the widest and with a long point. It is provided with a blood-channel, and the point is additionally reinforced, having a rectangular section. The second specimen is similar but longer, without a midrib and with sloped shoulders, as typical of earlier Roman *gladii*. Both these blades were probably originally *c.* 70cm (27.5in) long, and have been dated by Radman-Livaja to 35 BC and 1st century BC respectively, but without excluding slightly earlier dates. The present authors were able to find many other examples: one in the reserves of the Lyon Museum, one in the Museum de St-Romain-en-Gal, another in the Museum of Saint Germain, and several Caesarean swords in the Marzoli Museum in Brescia. These generally show a blade less slim than the earlier specimens as represented by the Smihel swords. It seems that from the time of the Delos specimen until the last quarter of the 1st century BC a gradual broadening of the blade took place, from 4.5 to 5cm. All these swords conform with Suda/Suidas' claim that the strong blade was pattern-welded in several layers of steel.

The pommel *(capulus)* was generally not metallic but made in bone or wood, and the grip was not yet indented for the fingers, but usually 'twisted'. However, we cannot exclude the presence of metallic hilts, as on Celtic swords. The sword worn by the *milites* on the Osuna relief is clearly straight, with a hilt and pommel of La Tène D1–2 typology, having a metallic handguard. Especially in Spain and Gaul, the hilts of early *gladii* show a strong Celtic influence. We should not forget that Caesar increased his army in Gaul from four to 12 legions, with a consequently urgent demand for weapons. Certainly those taken in large numbers from the enemy would have filled the need to some extent (the defenders of surrendering towns were required first to throw all their weapons over the walls).



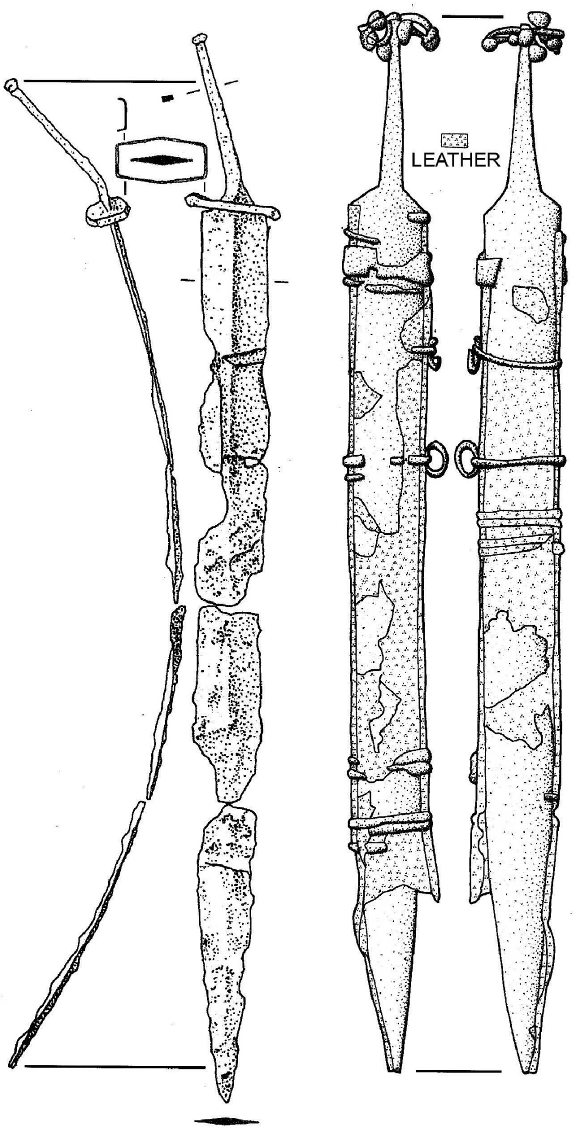
Three images of a Roman *gladius* of the Caesarean period from Saint-Romain-en-Gal, France; its substantial length, totalling 83cm (32.7in), suggests a cavalryman's weapon. (Musée Gallo-Romain, Saint-Romain-en-Gal; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

Gladius of Caesarean period, about 70cm (27.5in) long. This is one of a number of blades preserved in a museum in Brescia, northern Italy, few of which have yet been officially dated as Late Consular. (Reserve collection, Museo Marzoli, Brescia, inv. SB359-MR5601; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

The metal-framed scabbard *(vagina)* from Delos is very similar to those of previous Spanish swords, being of leather-covered wood wrapped with iron wires. However, the Osuna sword shows the characteristic addition of a fourth suspension ring so that it could be worn on either hip with the front facing outwards. Some scabbards lacked metal fittings, although the attachments for baldrics are well known from archaeology. The scabbard chape is rarely preserved in archaeological contexts, but a triangular shape with a round terminal is visible on figurative monuments, and confirmed by a recently found specimen from Soknopsiou Nesos in Egypt.

Daggers

It seems that the military dagger *(pugio)* was undoubtedly of Iberian origin and was adopted by the Romans during wars in that peninsula. Roman specimens of the early 1st century BC come from Caceres, Gracurris, and other sites in Spain. It generally had a double-edged blade, with the central part of 'waisted' shape like some sword blades. In the Late Consular period the midrib was very pronounced, in the shape of a rectangular bulge. The hilt consisted of a tang covered by a bone or wooden grip, and metal fittings. A disc at the pommel above a second centred on the grip was the most ancient shape, but is still visible in a Late Republican specimen from Oberaden. Examples with these double-disc hilts were discovered in the river Saône, and a blade comes from Alesia. However, these finds do not constitute proof that the *pugio* was already part of the standard equipment of the *milites*, and in written sources (*BA* LII, 2; *BH* XVIII, 2) it is associated with officers. Antonucci has suggested that in the Caesarean period it was mainly carried by officers and worn on the right side, or horizontally at the front of the body as shown on the stele of the centurion Minucius.



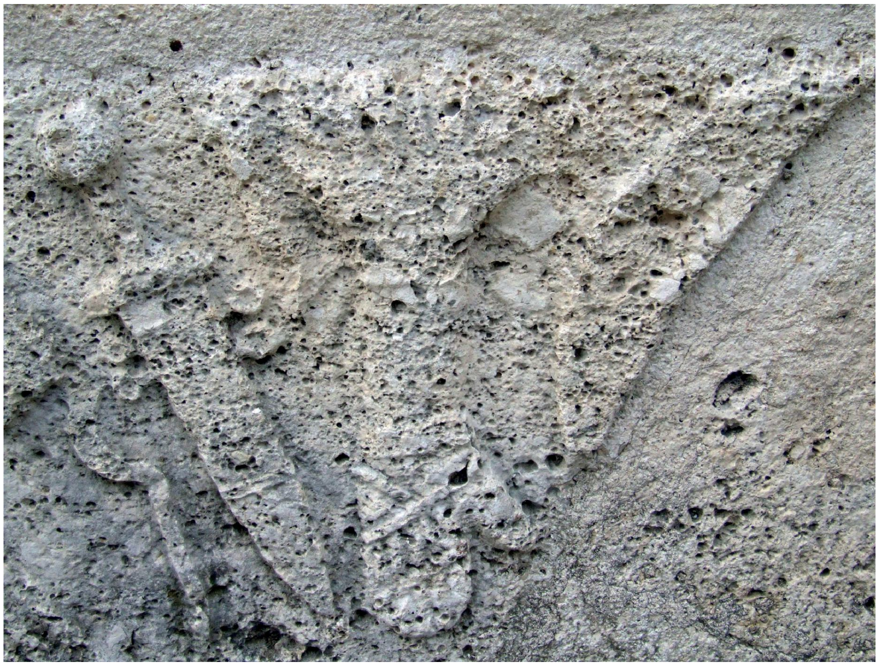
Two images each of *gladii* of 1st century BC date: (left, bent) blade from Mouriès in the Bouches-du-Rhône, southern France; and (right) from the island of Delos in the Cyclades, overall length 76cm (30in). The important Delos sword, in its leather-covered wooden scabbard, may date from 69 BC, when the island was invaded for the second time by the army of King Mithridates VI of Pontus. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti ex Miks)

This thesis is supported by the circumstance that, after the 1st century BC, the sword and dagger were among the imperial insignia (Val.Max, *Mem*.3, 5, 3; Antonius, following Dio Cassius, *Rom.*, LXV, 29, 2; Florus, *Epit.*, II, 21). Monuments from Narbonensis and Tauroentum (Le Brusq) show the *pugio* carried by officers. The first are virtually identical to the actual specimens from Alesia and Castra Caecilia. The second, showing a single-edged blade with an eagle-head pommel, confirms the existence in the 1st century BC of the Greek-inspired *parazonium* dagger or short sword. The colour of such daggers in paintings at Pompeii is sometimes rendered as yellow, probably meaning a gilded hilt and scabbard, or white, probably indicating ivory.

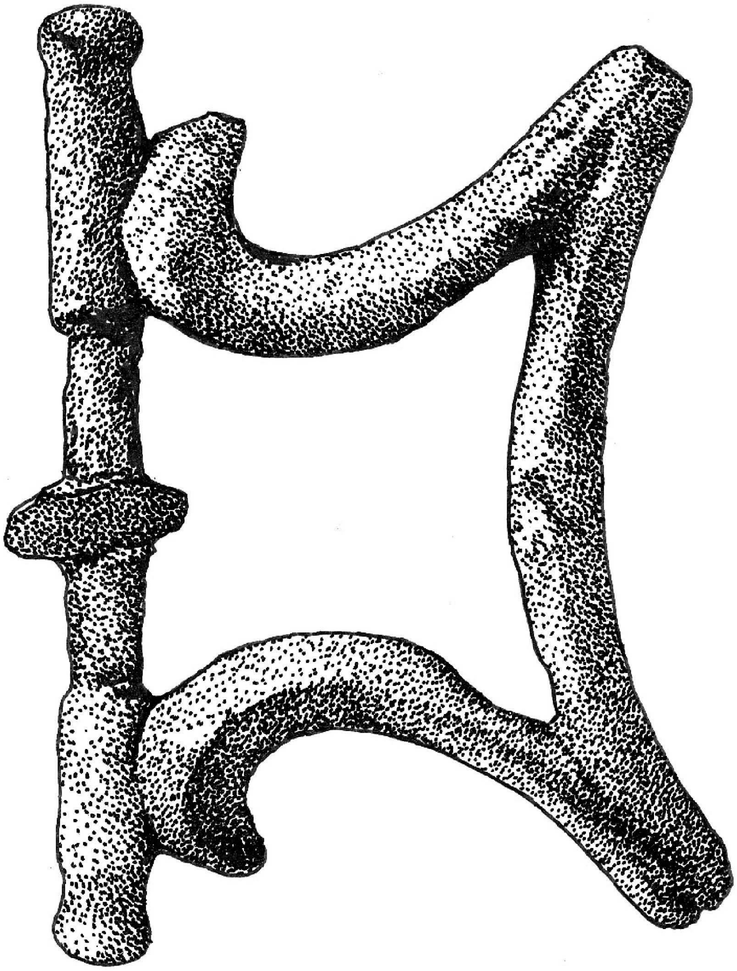
Belts

1st-century BC legionaries wore the metal-fitted *cingulum militiae* not only as a practical piece of military equipment (for one thing, it usefully distributed part of the weight of heavy ringmail armour), but also as the honoured mark of a man who was subject to military discipline. The belt distinguished him as a soldier even in the absence of other equipment; to have 'taken the belt' *(cingi)* meant to be a soldier; to be deprived of it *(discingi)* meant to be reduced in rank – a punishment which might be inflicted on all the ranks of the army. (Some Roman sources use the terms *balteus* or *cingulum* indiscriminately for a sword belt, whether referring to a shoulder baldric or a waist belt.)

In this period the use of applied metal belt plaques seems have been rare, judging by the scarcity of archaeological finds; however, the figurative monuments of Saint-Remy confirm their use, probably of the Numantia typology with ornamental bronze plates and buckles. The monument shows Late Consular infantrymen and cavalrymen wearing – in addition to the baldric by which the sword is suspended on the left or right side – a wide belt over their armour at waist height. Some of the warriors are still wearing a system of double crossed belts derived from the Greeks and Etruscans. Sometimes the belts were simply fastened by central double buckles of Celtic derivation, corresponding to the last La Tène typology. Recovered buckles, in iron or bronze, are generally D-shaped and without ornament, but there is also an angular concave shape with balls in the corners.


Although badly weathered, this relief on a wall of the Church of Saint Domenico at Sora in the Lazio region of Italy is important in showing the association of (centre) a *manica* protecting the right forearm – see **Plates A1** & **G1**; (left) a *gladius* in a decorated scabbard, and (right) what seems to be the convex curvature of a *scutum,* showing the *spina*. (in situ, Sora; author's photo)

Together with the Delos sword were found a plate, a belt buckle and two small buckles, which helped to reconstruct a possible system of attachment of the sword to the side of the belt. The same system could be confirmed for the Osuna sword, although the buckles and belt plate are quite different from the Delos specimens. The two small buckles were used to strap the sword to the belt, without these straps being visible from the outside, which may explain why the attachment system is never visible on 1st-century military tombstones. In other cases the scabbard was fastened to the belt or baldric through couples of fittings furnished with four iron rings, as in the specimen from Berry-Bouy.

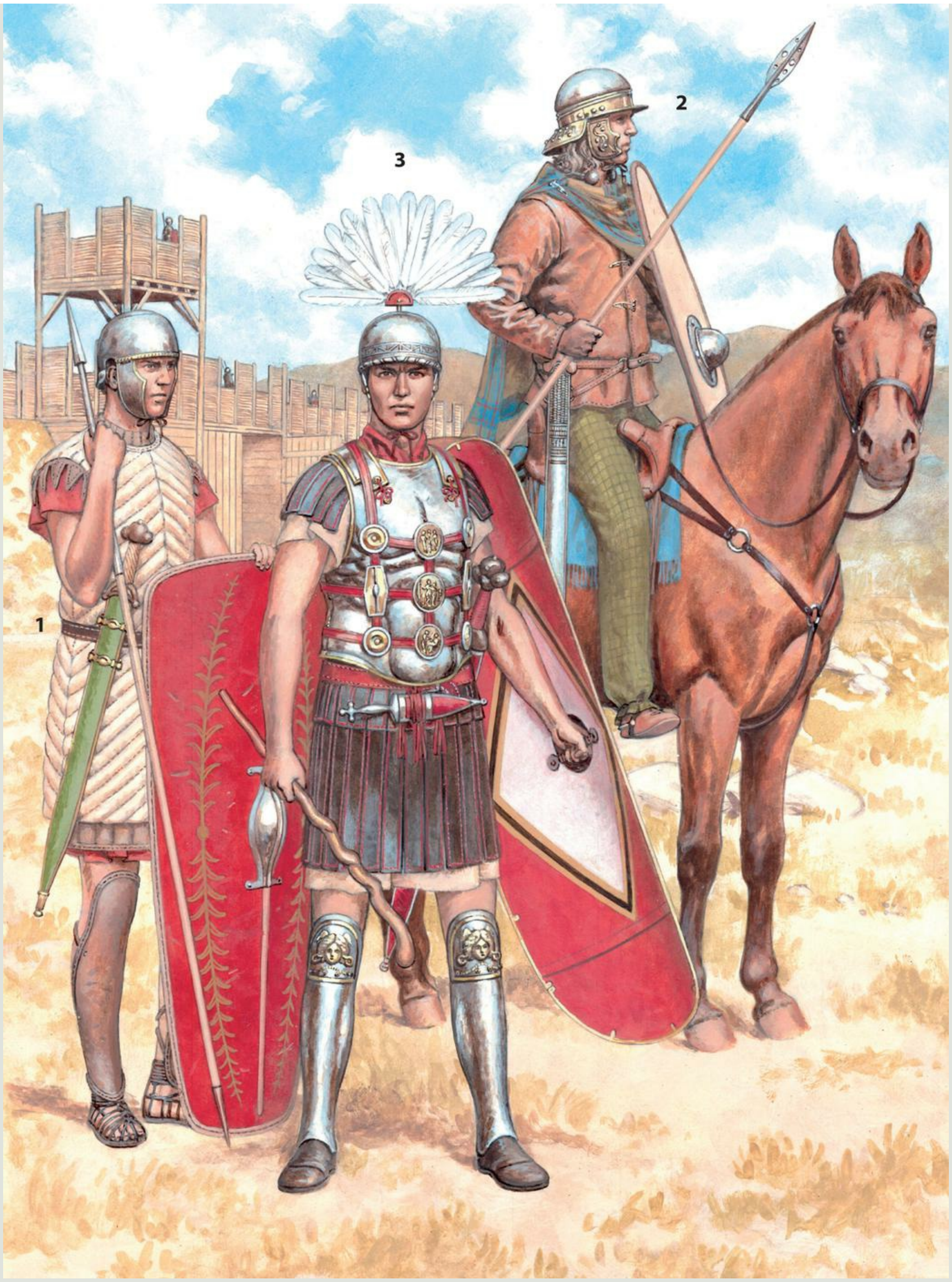


Buckle from the 1st-century BC grave of the 'Horseman of the Senate Well', France. This example is dated to the time of Caesar, although they were more common in the early Principate. Note its intriguing shape, apparently echoing that of the four-horned Celtic saddle which was integrated into Roman cavalry equipment. (Musée de Cluny, Paris; drawing by Florent Vincent)

The use of a baldric is clearly attested in many monuments, such as the metopae of the Munatius Plancus mausoleum in Gaeta on the west coast of central Italy or the reliefs of the Julii Mausoleum in Saint-Remy-de-Provence, southern France. The latter seems to echo Caesar's description of the centurions Vorenus and Pullo (*BG* V, 44), in which Pullo wears his sword on a baldric (here *balteus* refers to a true baldric). The brave Sestius Baculus, *centurio primus pilus* of Legio XII, had his *balteus* and torso pierced by an enemy javelin (*BG* V, 41). However, the gravestone of another contemporary centurion, Minucius T.F. Lorarius, shows the sword scabbard worn on his left side attached to a waist belt.

In general the sword was usually worn on the right side by the *milites gregarii*, on the left side by officers. However, this was not an absolute rule, unless the Glanum monument represents officers only: many of its carved figures wear the sword suspended from a baldric over the right shoulder in the Hellenic style, or attached on the left side.

D CIVIL WAR, 49 BC



(1) *Miles legionarius* from Gallia Cisalpina
Based on the bas-relief at Osuna in Spain (see **The ‘Warrior of Mondragon’ sculpture**–**Shield boss (umbo) of ‘almondshell’ shape**), this legionary wears a padded *coactile* body armour made of layers of felt and wool stitched together. Late Consular

armies assembled large numbers of men, and, given the urgency of equipping them, it was clearly impossible to supply all legionaries with ringmail. His iron helmet is a Gallic model copied from a find in a well in Vieille-Toulouse, southern France, together with other Coolus-Mannheim helmets; with its minimal neck guard, it resembles a helmet carved on the Osuna (Espata) relief. Various sources attest that it was not only officers who wore greaves *(ocreae).* The shield motif is copied from a relief in Narbonne, and his sword is reconstructed from a specimen from Giubiasco in modern Switzerland.

(2) Tauriscan auxiliary cavalryman

Under a Roman protectorate since the 2nd century BC, the Taurisci of eastern Noricum (roughly, modern Austria and Slovenia) furnished high-quality cavalry to the Roman army, such as those of King Voccius which served in Gaul. This warrior is reconstructed from a grave at Strmec near Bela Cerkev in Slovenia, dating from about 40 BC. His equipment is mainly Celtic, including an iron and bronze helmet of Novo Mesto typology. However, his sword in a finely chased scabbard was probably made in Italy, and is perhaps a Roman gift to an ally.

(3) *Centurio primus pilus*; battle of Pharsalus, 49 BC

The *primus pilus*, the senior of the 60 centurions in a legion, probably wore a tunic in white *(alba)*. The Coolus-Mannheim helmet is based on a specimen now in Mainz, to which we have added the *crista transversa* of a centurion as shown in a detail of the Julii Mausoleum at Saint-Rémy-de-Provence. This wealthy officer wears an anatomical cuirass over a *subarmalis,* surrounded by a *cingulum* inspired by the stele of the centurion Minucius dating from the 40s BC. His greaves are reconstructed from finds at Ardea, Italy, and his sword from a specimen discovered in El-Fayyum, Egypt; the trilobate pommel was common at this time. The inside surface of shields was sometimes decorated, and this motif comes from a relief in Narbonne. This senior veteran proudly displays his decorations on his torso, and carries the twisted vine stock marking his centurial status.

HELMETS

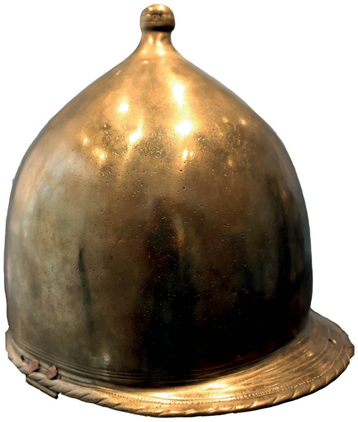
Types

In the 1st century BC a wide variety of helmets (*BG* II, 21; *BA* XII, 3; XVI, 3) came into use among the legions, due both to influences from the Hellenic world and adoption of new patterns of Celtic derivation. According to Varro (*DLL* V, 66), the word *galea* originally indicated a leather helmet, and *cassis* a metallic one, but in Caesar's works both terms refer to metal helmets. During that century, comparison between archaeological and iconographic sources allows us to differentiate the following groups:

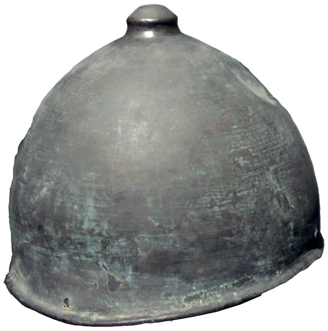
(1) Helmets of Etruscan-Italic tradition
(2) Helmets of new Celtic patterns and derivation
(3) Helmets of Greek-Italic tradition
(4) Local varieties.

(1) The Etruscan-Italic Montefortino-style helmet continued in use, as shown on the Altar of Ahenobarbus. It retained its ogival shape (rising to a rounded point), but during the years leading up to the Early Principate it showed a gradual increase in the size of the originally very small neck-guard. Few helmets of this typology have been found in Caesarean contexts (e.g. the specimen from Martre-de-Veyre, near Gergovie), but it is clearly represented on the Julii Mausoleum. There it has two kinds of crest: one of a centurion with a fan crest or feathers, another with a horse-tail plume. The continuation of its use during the Early Principate is attested by paintings in Pompeii, and we still find it represented on monuments (e.g. at Arles, and on the monument to Flavius Mikkales). Early Imperial specimens are attested in Bithynia, from the Germanic provinces, and from the battlefield of Bedriacum (69–70 AD), and are classified by Robinson as 'Montefortino C'.

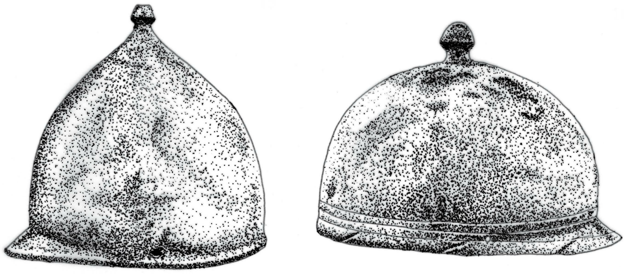
Generally this helmet is a one-piece bronze bowl of bulbous shape, drawn up to a point at the apex with a finial shaped as a hemispherical knob; the lower rim presents a bold border, often decorated with horizontal lines and flutings, and a very short, sloping neck-guard. The helmet was shaped by progressive hammering, presumably being designed to absorb the impact of blows from above. Cheek-guards *(bucculae)* made of thick bronze were attached by means of two rivets. Certainly this was not the main helmet worn by Caesar's soldiers, but was one of various categories employed; re-use over long periods (as in the case of one specimen from the Marne) was a typical practice throughout the ages.



Three-quarter left rear view of a Roman helmet of Montefortino typology, with the apex drawn up and mounting a hemispherical finial knob, and a small neck-guard; Robinson classifies this within his ‘Montefortino Type C’ group. This 1st-century BC example was recovered from the river Ljubljanica in modern Slovenia. Note the two rivets for the cheek-guard. (National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubiana; author’s photo, courtesy of the Museum)



Three-quarter right rear view of a bronze helmet of so-called Montefortino-Rieti type, named after the find area of the first example in Lazio, central Italy. Note the lower, stumpier finial and the lack of a neck-guard. The iconography suggests that this kind of helmet was widely used by both legionaries and marines; since this example was found in Egypt and is dated to the 40s BC, it is highly probable that it was used by one of Caesar’s soldiers during his Alexandrine campaign. (Museo Egizio, Turin, inv. 1824.C.7173; author’s photo, courtesy of the Museum)



Note the markedly varying profiles of these two 1st-century BC bronze helmets from the former Axel Guttmann Collection, though both are described as falling within the Montefortino-Rieti typology based on the find sites. (Drawings by Florent Vincent)

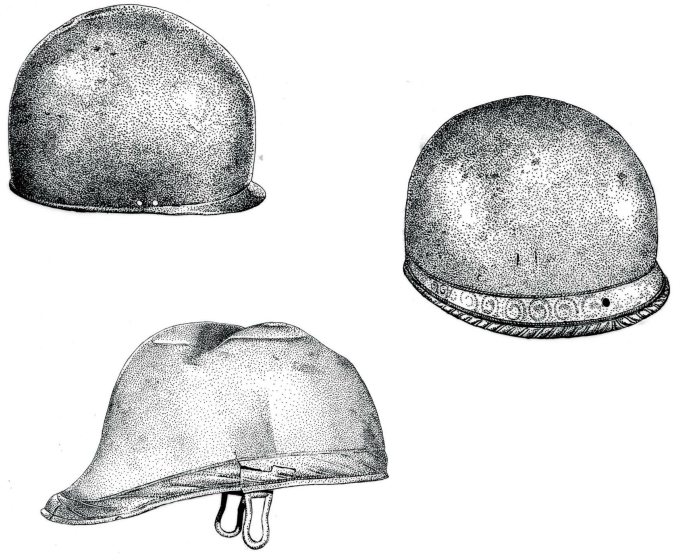
The quality of these Italic-tradition helmets declined as the need to equip large armies, especially during the Civil War, led to mass production. Sources attest that poor quality sometimes had to be remedied: for example, during the siege of Dyrrachium in 48 BC Pompey's soldiers had to cover their helmets with wickerwork protections *(viminea tegimenta)* against the missiles of Caesar's slingers and archers (*BC* III, 63).

Very akin to the Montefortino is the so-called 'Buggenum' type derived from earlier Etruscan-Celtic-Italic types, but simplified in manufacture and mostly lacking decoration. (Robinson also classes these examples within the wide bounds of his 'Montefortino Type C'.) Many examples from the mid-1st century BC have been found in south-western France and the Iberian Peninsula. In these helmets the finial is slighter smaller, rounded, and sometimes pierced to allow the insertion of a plume, while the neck-guard begins to increase in size. The cheek-guards in some specimens were attached to the bowl with only a single rivet. One relevant specimen, from Kulpa near Sisak in Croatia, bears on the neck-guard the inscription 'SCIP IMP', allowing identification with the army of P. Scipio Cornelius Nasica, consul in 49 BC.

(2) The process of simplification of the legionary helmet is visible in the so-called 'reversed jockey-cap' or Coolus-Mannheim type, which is preserved in both heavier and lighter specimens. The finial of the Montefortino had now disappeared, and the neck-guard gradually became larger and flatter. The Celtic derivation is confirmed by the wide diffusion of these helmets, probably beginning during the Gallic War, when it has been suggested that armourers in the Coolus district of the Marne were employed to supply the legions.

Many helmets of this typology have been found in Gaul, suggesting that it was one of the commonest types used by Caesar's *milites*. The bowl of the early heavier helmet (Robinson's 'Coolus Types A & B') is hemispherical, with a slight hint of a neck-guard in some specimens, and, rarely, some decoration on the lower rim. The lighter helmet (Robinson's 'Type C') shows a slightly globular shape, a growing and flatter neck-guard, and a riveted-on frontal reinforcement bar. Cheek-guards are usually missing from preserved specimens, and only simple side holes or rings attest the employment of a leather chin thong *(vinculum)*. However, in some examples the presence of two rings articulated upon a riveted tubular clasp at ear level suggests the hinged attachment of a metal cheek-guard.

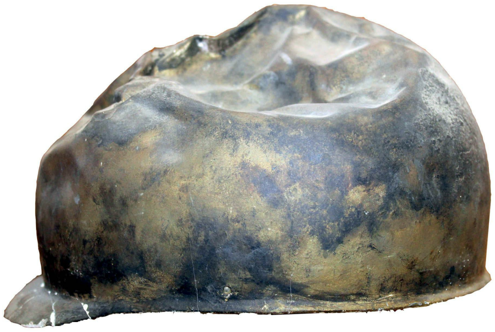
Robinson proposes that early specimens of the Coolus helmet might date from the Caesarean period, but majority opinion today is that this typology appeared only in the reign of Augustus. However, the expansion of Rome into the Celtic heartlands did clearly prompt the adoption by the army – presumably via the employment of both Celtic armourers and mercenaries – of sturdy iron Celtic helmet types, like the so-called Agen/Port specimens (found respectively at Agen in the Lot-et-Garonne region, and at Port-bei-Nidau in Switzerland).



Three Coolus-Mannheim helmets of the Caesarean period.
(Upper left) example found in Düsseldorf and now in the Bonn Museum.
(Right) heavier version, with punched decoration on the embryonic neck-guard, found in Vieille-Toulouse, France.
(Low left) lighter version from Mainz; extended at the rear, this specimen has a folded rim and narrow rings for attaching the leather *vinculum*. (Drawings by Florent Vincent)

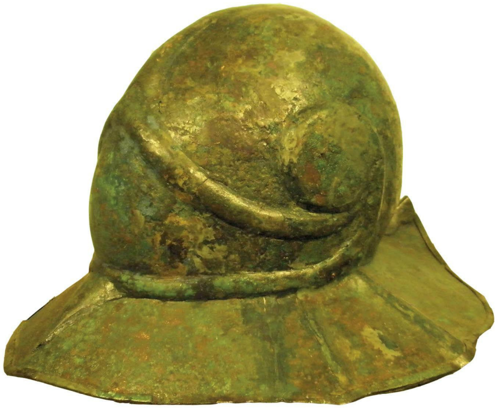
These represented better solutions to the challenge of protecting the whole head, the cheekbones and jaw without limiting the field of vision. The Agen type – as also found on the battlefield of Alesia, and shown on monuments of Caesar’s time – is characterized by a fairly deep hemispherical skull flared out into a brim all round, and just above this a raised rib also passing right around the bowl. The Port type lacks the brim and rib; it has a very short frontal peak, and above this two raised metallic volutes (‘eyebrows’) on the front, these having both decorative and reinforcement functions. The rear is stepped down to a short neck-guard, below two or three partial flutings. Both variants have big ‘E-shaped’ cheek-guards, sometimes decorated with Celtic

La Tène patterns, and attached to the bowl by hinges with pairs of rivets. Robinson traces a direct line of evolution from these helmets to his ‘Imperial Gallic’ series, which first appeared at the turn of the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD.



Right profile of a heavy Coolus-Mannheim helmet from Breuvannes, eastern France, 1st century BC. (Cast, Musée de Langres; author’s photo, courtesy of the Museum)

(3) Helmets of Hellenistic types feature in the iconography of the period, and we should remember that the conquest of the last Greek kingdoms in Asia Minor and Egypt yielded huge amounts of military equipment, which logic suggests would have been taken into use during the military expansions of the Civil War. Helmets of Boeotian and pseudo-Corinthian types are represented on the Julii Mausoleum. The Greco-Roman tradition of the Attic style, and of more elaborate helmets of Greco-Italic origin, continued in the 1st-century BC Roman army. Attic and probably also Apulian-Corinthian helmets, often elaborately decorated, are visible in Pompeian and Roman frescoes; the iconography attests to their long retention as part of the panoply of senior officers and elite troops. The rarity of such helmets in 1st-century BC archaeology may be explained by the relative failure to excavate battlefields and fortresses of the Late Hellenistic period, and by the fact that specimens preserved in the reserve collections of Near Eastern museums await proper publication.

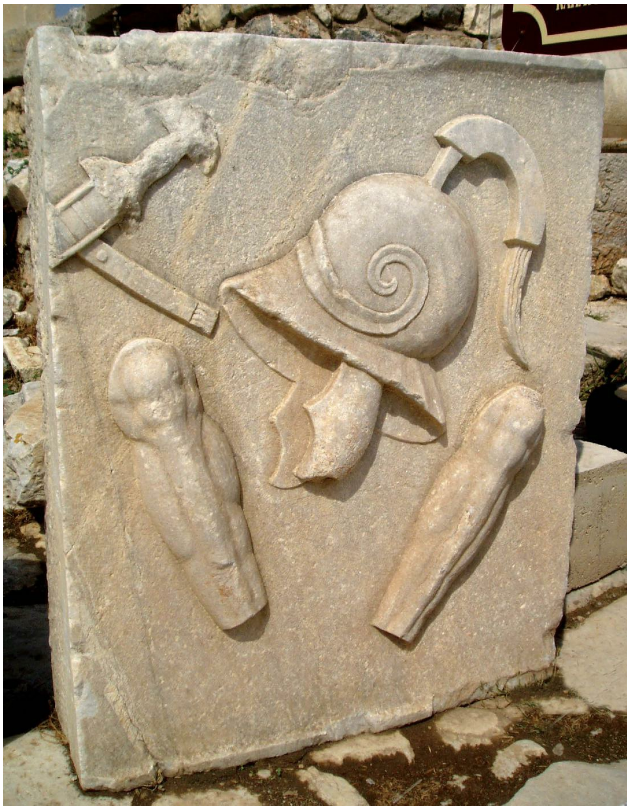


Three-quarter front view of a Ist-century BC Roman helmet of Hellenistic type; compare with **Plate B1**. Such helmets seem sometimes to have been reserved to officers and elite units, but their use by the *milites gregarii* is well attested by iconography from Glanum and Narbonne. The Pompeii frescoes also clearly show 'Askalon' and other Late Hellenistic types. (Hamburg Museum, inv. 1917.173; photo Wikimedia)

(4) In Roman provincial armies the retention of local helmet shapes is visible on various monuments, such as the Osuna relief from Spain. Here the *milites* wear a helmet similar in shape to the most common form of Iberian headgear: a close-fitting 'bascinet' stepped down at the rear, with reinforcement bands around the edge, and leather cheek-guards.

Details

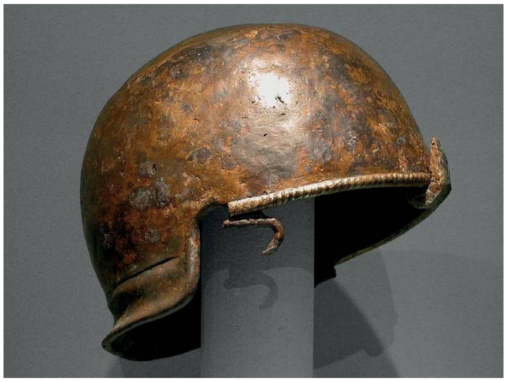
In the helmets of Montefortino and Agen/Port typologies, the chin thong was attached to an iron rivet fixed on the underside of the neck-guard, then passed forwards to iron rings attached inside each cheek-guard, and finally knotted under the chin, as can be seen in various iconographical sources.



1st-century BC stele of a Roman officer in Ephesus (modern Efes) on the Ionian coast of Turkey. This shows a sword; a helmet of Attic-Boeotian type (note the plume partly confined in some sort of tubular cover); and a pair of finely ‘muscled’ greaves. Late Hellenistic equipment was widely used in Greece and the eastern Hellenistic kingdoms that became vassals of Rome. (*in situ* Efes; author’s photo)

Any crests were usually attached to the helmets shortly before battle. Caesar (*BG* II, 21; *BA* 12) reports that during a sudden attack by the Belgae at the Sambre his soldiers were so caught by surprise that they could neither put the crests *(insignia)* onto their helmets nor take the covers *(tegimenta)* from their shields. The crest colour for Roman soldiers in the Statilii tomb fresco is red (*rubra* – Virgil, *Aeneis*, XII, 89), but yellow, white and black crests are also shown in the Pompeii paintings. Some Montefortino helmet specimens have a hole drilled through lead at the finial for the insertion of plumes, usually of swan (Virgil, X, 185–190) or duck feathers. The presence of a hole for a crest pin in the knobs of helmets leads us to suppose that the insertion of the feather or hair plumes was by means of a tubular *cannula*.

Vegetius states that the centurion’s transverse crest *(crista transversa)* was silvered *(argentata)* so as to be easily visible in battle; possibly only the crest-holder was silvered, and the horsehair or feathers were light grey in colour. Although it is difficult to understand exactly to which period Vegetius is referring here, he is writing of a traditional officers' distinction, which finds more correspondence in 1st-century BC iconography (Etruscan urns, Aquileia and Saint-Remy monuments, etc.) than in the Imperial period. No doubt the *crista transversa* was used by Caesar's centurions, and the only colour mentioned for it in a Roman source is silver.

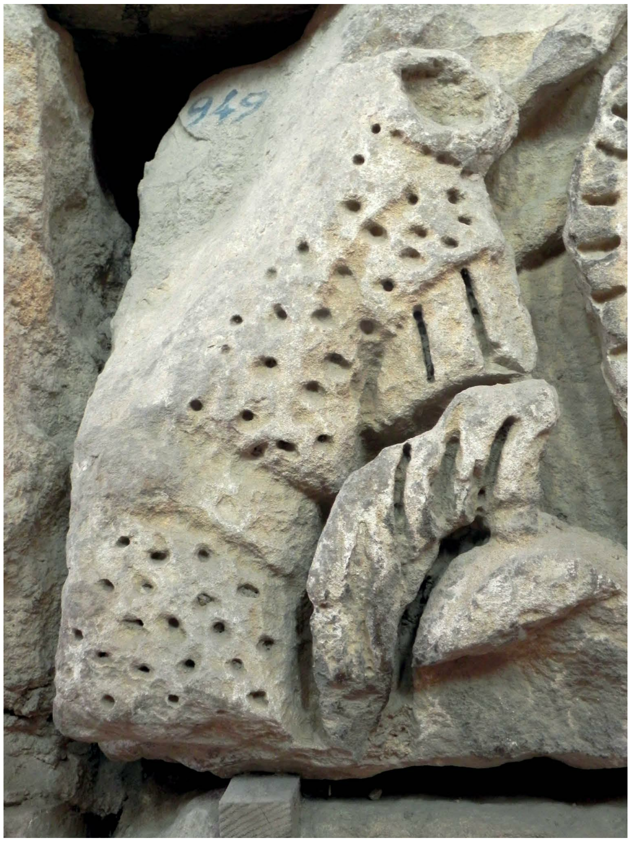


Light Roman helmet from Toulouse-Estarac, southern France, 1st century BC. This unique specimen is virtually identical to the helmets on the Osuna/Espata relief in Spain, and probably dates from the Caesarean period. (Musée de St-Raymond, Toulouse; photo courtesy Dr Cesare Rusalen)

That many helmets lacked the means to attach plumes or crests is attested by the archaeology (e.g. helmets of Coolus type), and is confirmed by the written sources. For instance, Lucanus (*Phars.,* VII, 586–587) mentions a *cassis plebeia*, i.e. a common helmet, being worn by Brutus at Pharsalus. While on the march helmets (like shields) were covered with leather (Plut., *Lucullus*, XXVII), probably to protect them from the elements and to prevent tell-tale reflections. Officers' helmets might probably be gilded or silvered, mounted with gemstones or other precious materials, lacquered or painted. This is shown on a Pompeii fresco representing the god Mars, whose Attic helmet is painted red and yellow, with a red holder for the crest and yellow plumes.

BODY PROTECTION

Roman body armour was generally called a *lorica*. In the commentaries of Caesar the word is used in association with both officers and legionaries. Some soldiers are called *loricati* and others not – perhaps because not all of them wore armour, or because in a particular passage he is referring specifically to soldiers dressed in armour at that moment. In many monuments of the period the *milites* are represented fighting clad only in their belted tunics. We may deduce that several different kinds of body protection were employed in the 1st century BC, even by men of the same legion.

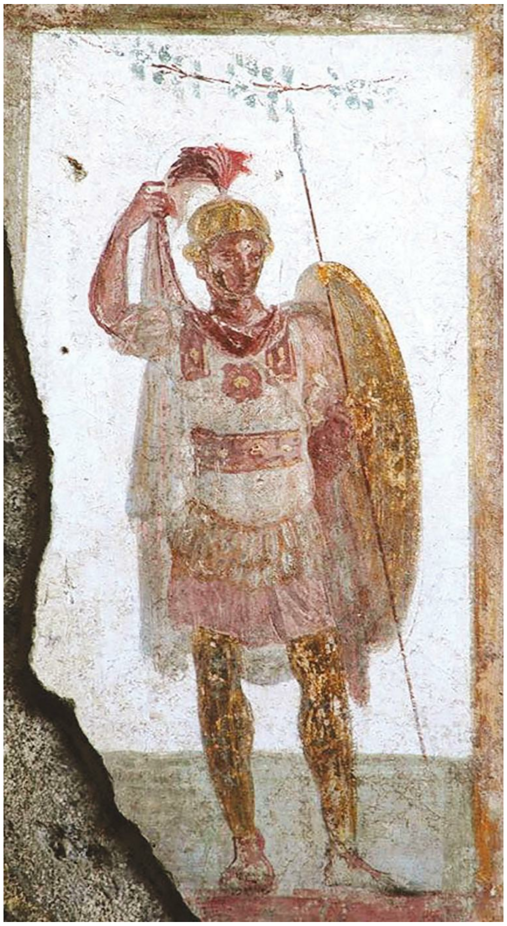


Detail from a late 1st-century BC figurative monument in Gallia Narbonensis, representing a ringmail *gallica.* Note the *pteryges* of an under-armour garment showing at the upper arm, and the absence in this case of additional mail *humeralia* shoulder-doublings. (Musée Lapidaire, Narbonne, inv. 949; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

Ringmail

Iron ringmail, already in use since at least the 3rd century BC (Sil. It., *Pun.,* X, 400–401), was the main armour of the 1st-century *miles gregarius*. Varro, who soldiered as a legate under Pompey in Spain, calls the *gallica* 'a tunic of iron rings' (*DLL*, V, 24). Its adoption by the Etruscans and Romans from the Celts is strongly supported, though we cannot entirely exclude other theories.

The noun *gallica* ('a Gaulish') certainly figured in military slang. Lucanus (*Phars.*, VII, 498–499) refers to it as 'heavy chains covering the chest' *(qua torta graves lorica catenas opponit tutoque latet sub tegmine pectus)*. One possible Caesarean image appears on the arch of Saint-Remy, and others on monuments in Narbonensis, although most of the latter date from the Augustan period. A fragment of Caesarean-period ringmail was found in the Celtic *oppidum* at Gergovie, and another from one near Berne. They show the usual construction of four riveted rings linked through a fifth complete ring, as in the carving on the Osuna monument.



This fresco figure from the ‘House of the Vetii’ in Pompeii is of the second style, dating from 80 to 20 BC. He may be identified as a *tribunus* by the short *parazonium* sword at his left hip, and by the Hellenistic *zoni militaris* girdle, possibly of red-lacquered leather. He is clad in a white leather or linen armour with contrasting shoulder-guards. Note too his bronze Montefortino helmet with a red plume, and the bronze greaves covering his knees. (*in situ*, Pompeii; author’s photo)

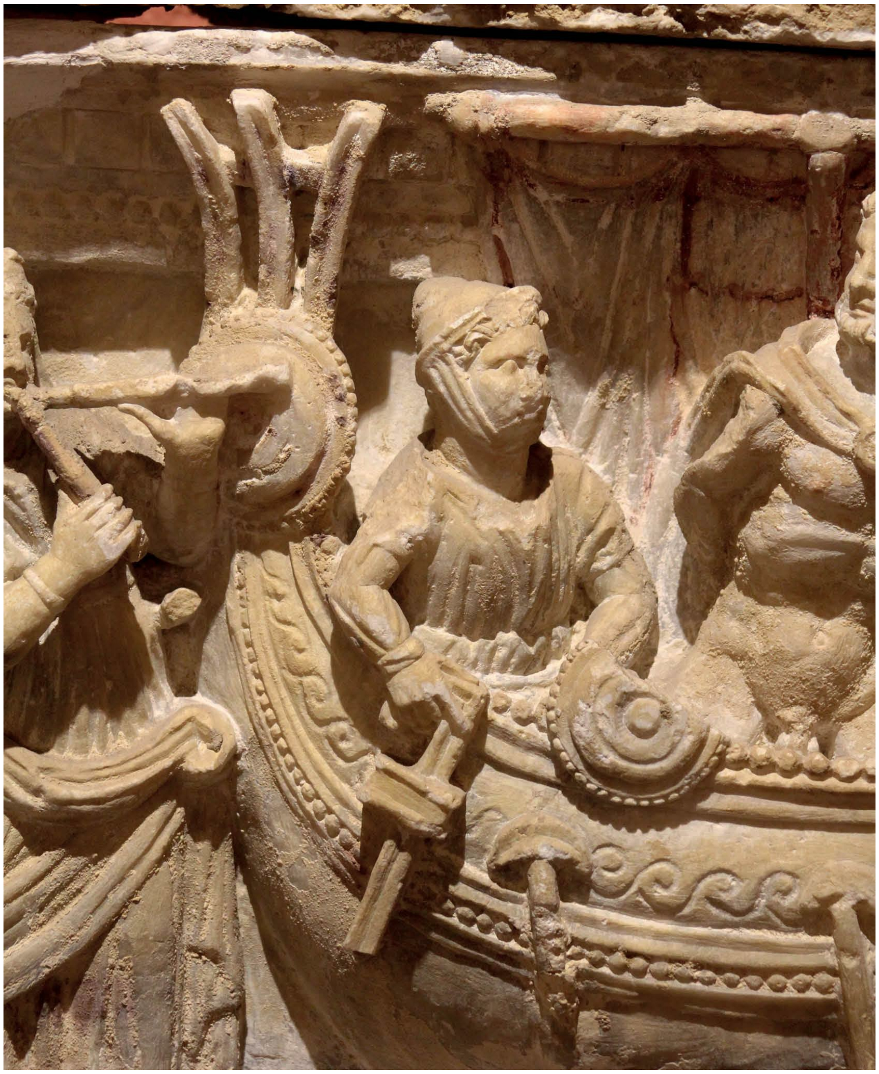
Often (but not invariably) the *gallica* was furnished with leather-lined shoulder-doublings *(humeralia),* fastened by means of pins passing through a bronze or leather piece placed horizontally on the upper breast. The shoulder-pieces sometimes extended into a reinforcement piece across the upper back, which suggests that the construction was probably inspired by Greek linen armours. It was probably towards the end of the Caesarean period that metal fasteners appeared, which hooked the shoulder flaps to the breast armour (see Saint-Remy monument), following a model derived from the Celts. The *humeralia* might extend outwards to cover the deltoid muscle (the original Celtic mail armour was sometimes caped at the shoulders). Examining the monuments celebrating Caesar's victories, Antonucci has proposed the existence of chiselled metallic shoulder plates, but these might equally represent embossed leather, as visible on the Ahenobarbus altar. The considerable weight of the ringmail armour bearing on the shoulders was partly mitigated by distribution to the hips via the *cingulum* around the waist, and by the presence of an under-armour garment *(subarmalis)* of felt or leather.

Organic armours, and under-armour garments

Obviously, the expensive *gallica* was not universally available to the troops, who were often supplied with protection made of organic materials.

The linen armour (*linothorax*), derived from ubiquitous Greek and Etruscan models, was a cuirass of layered and stiffened linen, furnished with shoulder-guards fastened on the breast. It was still widely employed in the Late Consular period, and is visible on the Glanum reliefs. Protections in leather (*corium*), and in felt and fabric (*coactilium* – from the verb 'to gather together'), are both mentioned by Caesar (*BC* III, 44: 'to avoid the missiles, nearly all the soldiers had made themselves jerkins or other protections out of felt, quilting or hide').

The reliefs in Aquileia and Narbonensis often show armour with gorgets protecting the neck. A possible leather version of the *thorax*, furnished with a gorget and short sleeves and mounted upon a padded garment with lappets, is visible on the Aquileia monument, related to a centurion. This panoply, forming two superimposed armours (one in leather, the other in fabric), can be linked to the description by Valerius Maximus of the heroic centurion Caesius Scaeva in Britain, who, although burdened by the weight of two *loricae*, threw himself into the surf (Val. Max, *Mem.*, III, 2, 23); obviously, this must refer to non-metallic armours.



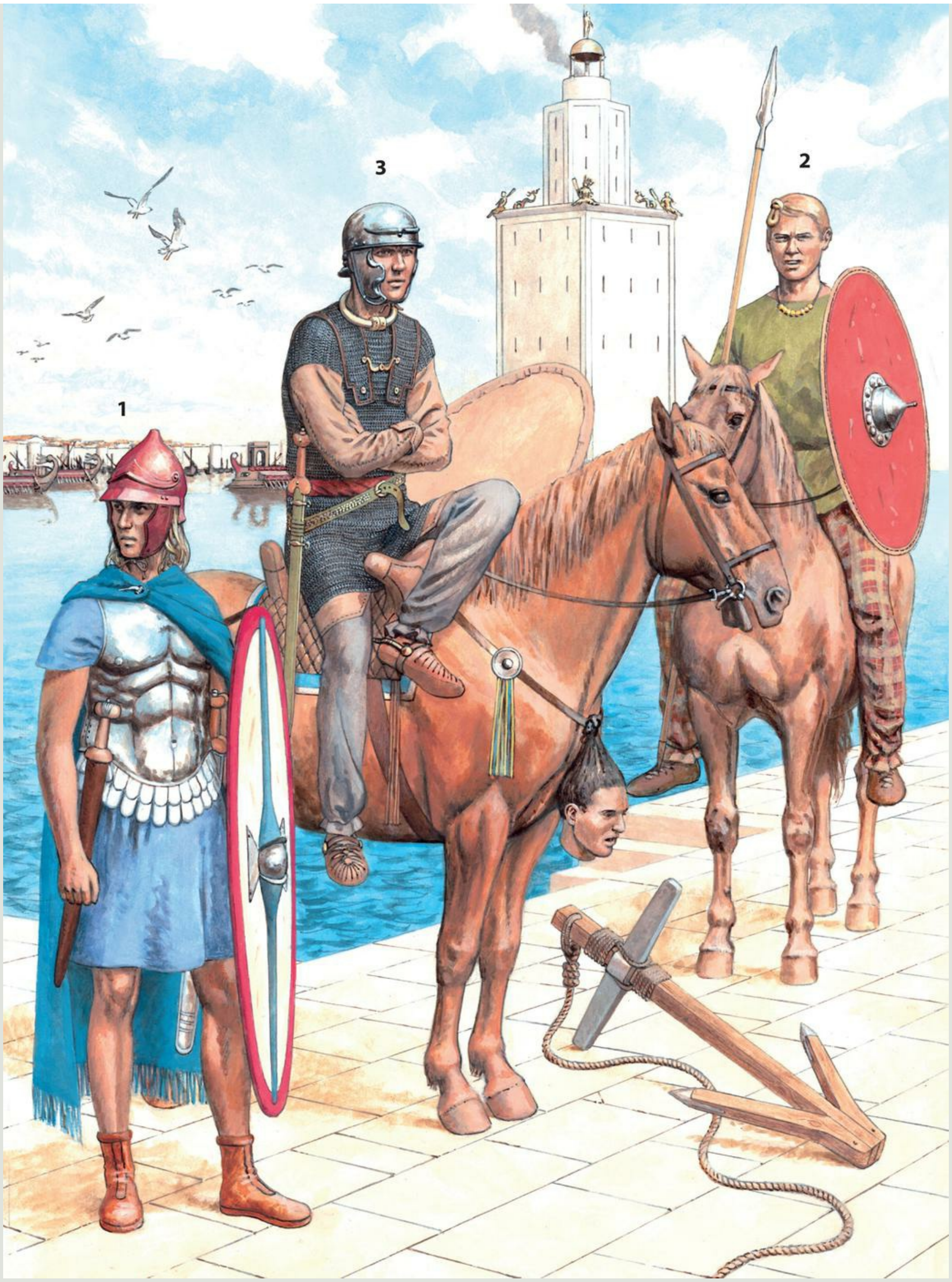
Detail from a 1st-century BC Etruscan urn, representing Odysseus and the Sirens. In contrast to the light tunics depicted in many representations of Roman sailors, this helmsman seems to wear a heavier quilted fabric *coactile* garment as body protection. (Museo Guarnacci, Volterra; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

The use of leather armour is clearly attested by other sources. L.Calpurnius Piso Caesonius went to Macedonia (58–55 BC) with orders to requisition as many cattle as were needed to provide hides to be shaped into armour, shields and horse trappings (Cicero, *In Pis*., XXXVI, 87). The use of organic armour by legionaries is also mentioned by Plutarch, who, writing of the defeat of Crassus at Carrhae (*Crassus*, XXIV, 4), uses the Greek word *malakos* to underline the difference between rigid (*antitupos*) and flexible (*malakos*) protection, i.e. between metallic and organic armours.

Representations of trophies of arms also clearly show a protective garment worn under the armour, the so-called *subarmalis*. This was often of linen, provided with the usual *pteryges* to protect the limbs, the *pteryges* of officers often being fringed in gold or silver thread.

Garments worn with or without other armour are often shown as quilted on Caesar’s coins celebrating his triumphs. The relief of Urso/ Estepa (see **Romano-Iberian soldiers**) shows a couple of *milites* of the same unit wearing different kinds of body protection: one wears the ringmail *gallica*, and the second a garment showing separate strips (of felt?) stitched together. This is also shown being worn by another soldier elsewhere in the same relief group.

E ALEXANDRINE WAR, 48–47 BC



(1) Galatian infantryman

This infantryman from Pergamon, serving with the allied reinforcements which reached Caesar in Egypt, is wearing typical Hellenistic equipment mixed with Celtic elements, as illustrated by terracotta figures from Asia Minor. His painted helmet is of

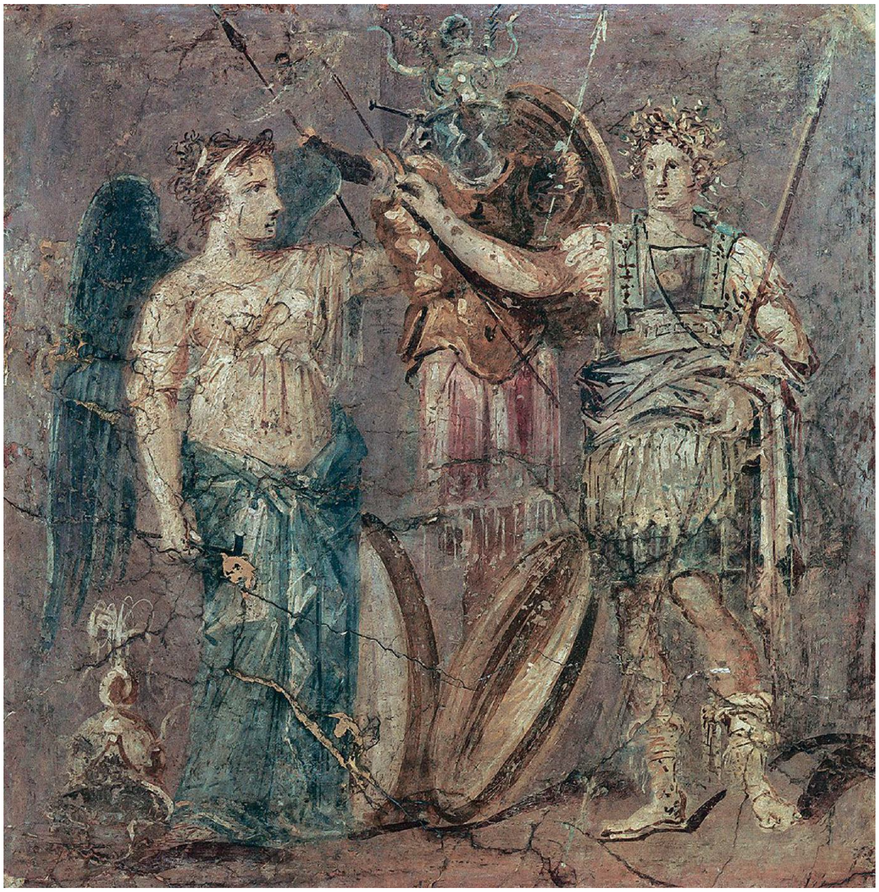
‘Askalon’ type; note his iron ‘muscled’ armour *(statos*), and his large Celtic shield painted white with a blue *spina*. He is carrying a long sword of the La Tène III type with a bilobate pommel, slung from a waist belt hidden by the *pteryges.*

(2) Germanic cavalry auxiliary

Unlike Roman soldiers, typical Germanic warriors were poorly equipped and armed, but their fearsome reputation encouraged Caesar to form alliances with certain German chiefs. (In the Rhineland, the neighbouring Germanic and Celtic cultures were mixed.) This mercenary is recognizable by his stereotypical reddish hair, sometimes knotted at the side in a so-called ‘Suebian knot’; by his tall stature, fair skin and pale eyes. The Germans were reluctant to wear body protection, very often relying only on a wooden shield. Their weapons were spears or javelins, and sometimes a sword – perhaps of Gallic type, probably acquired as loot. The Germanic horses were small, stocky and ugly, but very disciplined and robust. The Germans did not use Gallic saddles.

(3) Gallic cavalry auxiliary

In obvious contrast, this Gallic nobleman can afford a full panoply: a coat of ringmail worn over a long-sleeved leather garment, and an iron helmet of the Port model (named after a find near Berne, Switzerland). This helmet became popular during the Gallic War via the Eastern Celtic allied contingents who arrived to join Caesar from Central Europe, and its characteristics would later evolve into the Roman ‘Weisenau’ type (Robinson’s ‘Imperial Gallic’ series). The warrior’s weapon is the long Celtic sword; his shield is flat, and would be fitted with a new circular *umbo*. His horse-harness is visible on the reliefs of the Julii Mausoleum at Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, and on the Arch of Orange. Gallic horsemen are reported as operating in a *trimarcisia* of three men: the *eques* who rode into battle, and two ‘squires’ who waited in the rear to rescue him if necessary, or even to replace him if he fell. The taking of heads was common.



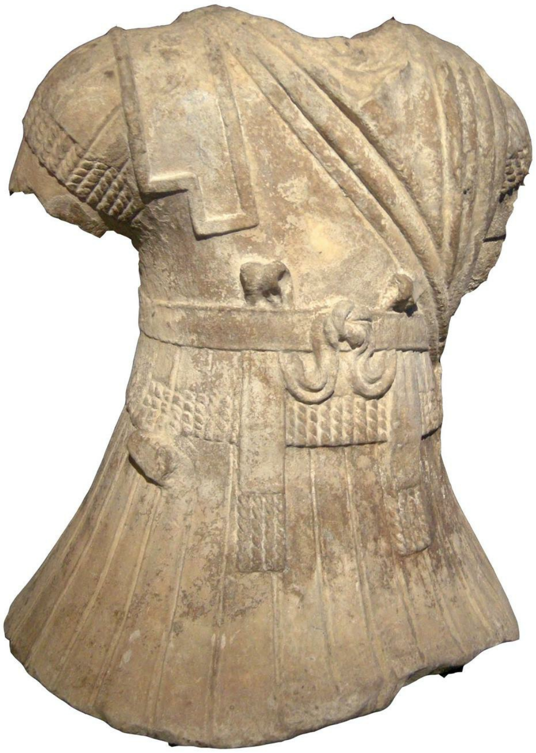
The goddess Victory and a victorious commander with a trophy of arms, in a fresco of the fourth style from Pompeii, 45–79 AD. Note, on the trophy, the Boeotian helmet fitted with horns, and the bronze *statos* cuirass over a bicolour *subarmalis* with white and red *pteryges*. The armour of the general is in gilt metal, with a purple pectoral bearing a gorgon mask, and light blue *humeralia* over the shoulders. His just-visible purple tunic is that of a consul or proconsul, and his *paludamentum* is purple lined with off-white. Note his off-white officers' *cothurni* boots and the *parazonium* short-sword. (National Archaeological Museum, Naples; photo courtesy of Prof Livio Zerbini)

Metallic armours

Metal cuirasses *(thoraka)* of Hellenistic type are visible on the Gaeta reliefs and Pompeii paintings. These *statos* ('standing', i.e. rigid) corselets often show *pteryges* attached to the lower edge, in one or two ranges. A pair of shoulder-guards were attached at the upper back, from which also emerged rising protection for the neck.

Anatomical or 'muscled' armours (i.e. imitating the musculature of the torso), in both leather and metal, are attested in monuments and artworks, and by some archaeological specimens (fragments from the Albenga ship, cuirass from Granada, and fragments from Lanuvium). Particularly splendid metallic versions were reserved for generals, such as that represented on the copy of a statue of Caesar made in the Julio-Claudian period and preserved at Campidoglio. The breastplate is highly decorated in low relief, with embossed images of griffins combined with vegetal and volute decorations. The lower edge is decorated with round lappets forming a double border *(cymation)* hinged to the main torso of the armour. Probably very similar, but ornamented with British pearls, was the *thorax* that we are told Caesar offered up to the goddess Venus Genitrix. Simplified models are also shown on figurative monuments, suggesting the employment in battle of such muscled half-armours not only by senior but also junior officers, and perhaps even by common legionaries.

On the Aquileia monument a muscled armour is shown associated with a Montefortino helmet, and is clearly a rigid metal cuirass mounted as a trophy. This is also proof that Roman artists copied specimens made of different materials taken not only from foreign enemies but also during civil wars. Sometimes the lappets were metallic extensions of the armour, as on the statue of Munatius Plancus today in the Museo Nazionale Romano. Armours of such type were often furnished with shoulder-guards, leather-lined on metallic specimens, fastened on the breast by thongs attached to metal clasps.



Damaged sculpture showing the armoured torso of a cavalry officer, from the temple of Juno Sospita at Lanuvium in the Lazio region of central Italy. A series of sculptures in this temple, dating from the first half of the 1st century BC, show how Roman cavalrymen might be equipped in the time of Caesar, with either a *thorax statos* (metallic cuirass) or a layered cloth *linothorax.* The *pteryges* above the hips and on the upper arms show fringes of twisted threads. (*in situ* Lanuvio; author's photo)

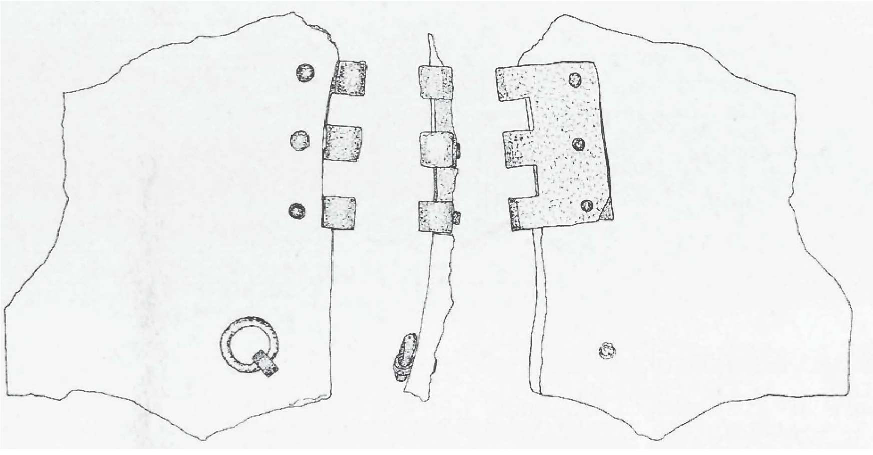
Scale armour was also used. Although we do not currently have finds from the Gallic Wars, there are iconographic representations (e.g. Etruscan urns, and gravestone of Marcus Nonius, 27 BC). This armour, of Greek importation, was made of small plates of bronze, iron, leather or horn cut to the desired shape, and fixed upon a backing of leather or linen by means of wire or leather laces. The scales were attached in parallel horizontal rows so as to overlap each other both sideways and downwards, like fish-scales or roof-tiles.

Various monuments show the protection of the legs by metallic greaves *(ocreae)*. Derived from Greek and Etruscan prototypes, these were usually made of a single sheet of bronze, either fitting around to the calf or simply attached to protect the shin. The Aquileia reliefs possibly show a type in which the knee protection is divided by a joint from that of the lower leg, as confirmed by the Ardea specimen and successive Imperial examples. They bear embossed *gorgona* on the knee, so were perhaps reserved to officers. Simpler greaves, perhaps sometimes made of leather, are represented worn by common soldiers on the Urso reliefs and Pompeii frescoes. In these sources the greaves are no longer held in place simply by the flexibility of the thin metal around the legs, but fastened by a couple of leather tongues below the knee and above the heel.

SHIELDS

The *scutum*

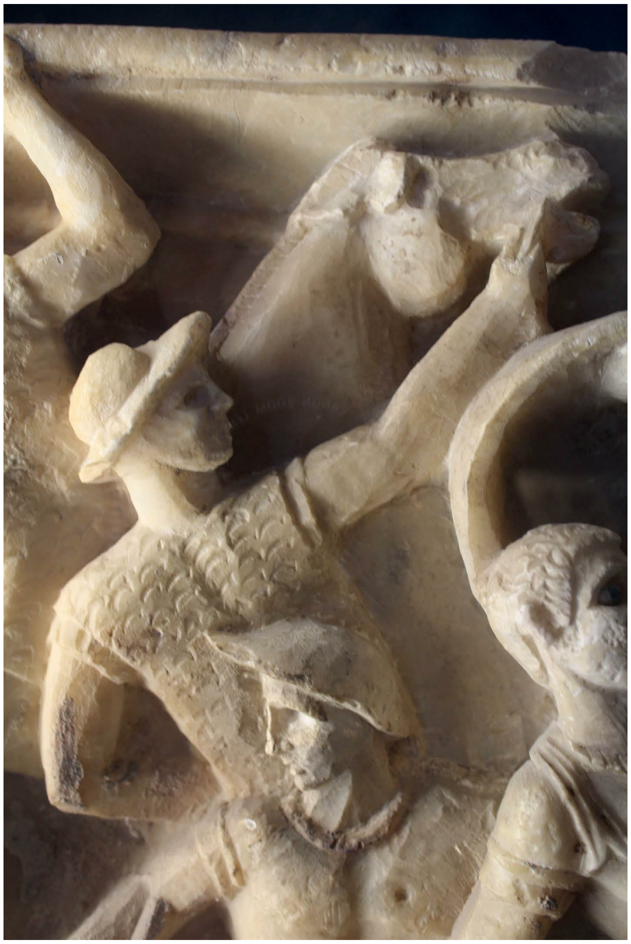
While the texts are generally silent about the kind of legionary shield used in the 1st century BC, we may assume that it did not change from that of the previous period. The *milites* were equipped with an oval oblong shield *(scutum)* reinforced with a raised central spine *(spina)*, originating in a combination of Italic (Livy, VIII, 8) and Celtic models. Writing a hundred years before Caesar, Polybius calls this shield *thyreos*: the convex surface measured 'two and a half feet' in width and 'four feet' in length (*c*. 75 x 120cm/ 29.5 x 47in). Its upper and lower ends were strengthened with iron edging, which protected it from descending blows and from damage when rested on the ground. While iron rim fragments have been found at Alesia, on the basis of other finds it is possible that by Caesar's day the shield was edged all round the circumference, usually with copper-alloy guttering.



Images of outer, edge and inner surfaces of a fragment of a *thorax statos* from Lanuvium, 1st century BC. This rare example of Roman 'muscled' bronze armour of the Caesarean or Augustan period includes a part of the abdomen, with the lower side hinges of the breastplate. The ring was for the retention of the removable hinge pin. (Antikenmuseum Basel; drawing by Andrea Salimbeti from Cahn)

The shield had a central iron boss (*umbo*) attached over the spine to turn aside the heaviest impacts (Pol.VI, 23, 2). Many specimens of oval iron *umbones* were found in Gallia (including at Alesia) and Germania. Some are of the 'butterfly' type, with a central boss of conical section and two lateral wings (e.g. specimen from Alesia, inv. 24358).

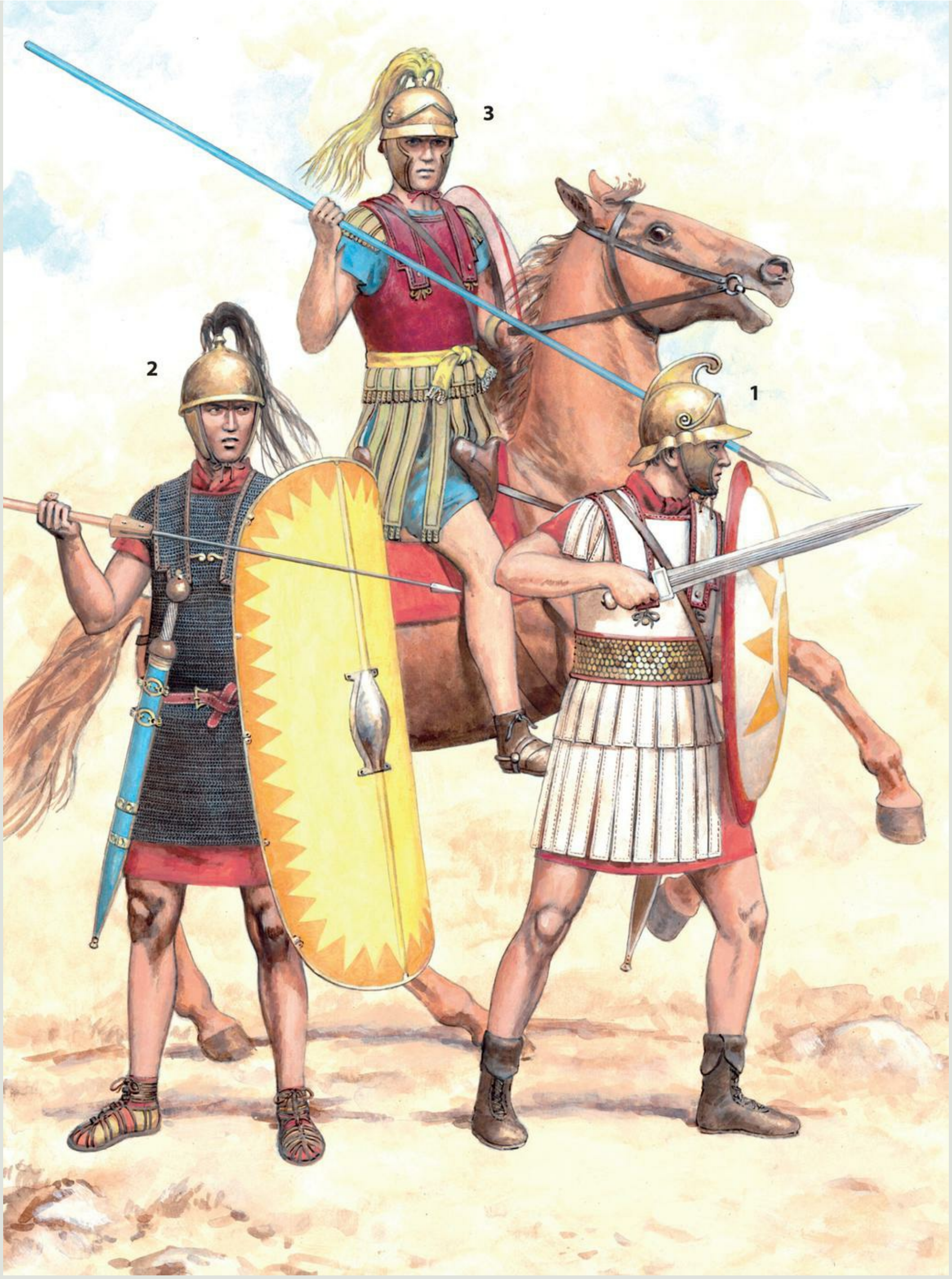
The internal grip was horizontal, allowing the shield to be manipulated in any direction. This can be seen on some monuments, while others show a double grip (e.g. the metopae of the Plancus monument, the Aquileia reliefs, and the Julii Mausoleum). There is no logical reason to doubt any such representations; standardization was foreign to the ancient world, and no doubt shield grips were among the details that differed. On the Julii monument a grip resembling that of the El-Fayyum shield (see below) is well illustrated, together with other kinds; why should an artist falsely represent one detail alongside one confirmed by the archaeology?



Scene of the siege of Thebes on a 1st-century BC Etruscan urn. The helmets are Hellenistic (Boeotian?), and the detailed depiction of the armour at centre seems to show scale construction. (Museo Guarnacci, Volterra; author’s photo courtesy of the Museum)

A complete specimen of a larger plywood shield, but otherwise perfectly corresponding to the description, has been found preserved in the Egyptian desert, at Kasr-El-Harit in the oasis of El-Fayyum. This shield was reinforced with a wooden ‘barleycorn’ boss centred in a vertical spine divided into three sections and fixed by metal nails. The interior of the central boss was – as indicated on the monuments – hollowed out and furnished with a horizontal handgrip. Remains of rings for the attachment of carrying straps were also found. The colours have now disappeared from the Fayyum shield, but in frescoes on the Esquiline some shields are painted in off-white, with the ‘barleycorn’ yellow. A similar shield from a very faded painting in the Necropolis of Porto is shown as yellow.

F ‘VENI, VIDI, VICI’, 47 BC



(1) *Miles* of *Legio XXII Deiotariana*

This legion was raised in the East in around 48 BC, and was named after Deiotaros, the Galatian king of the Tolistobogii tribe (from modern eastern Turkey) who was an ally of Pompey. Trained in the Roman way, these troops first supported the

Romans in their war against Mithridates, and the survivors subsequently served as this single legion under Caesar during his campaign against Pharnaces of Pontus. Our subject is reconstructed from a relief at Glanum which commemorates this campaign. His equipment is essentially Hellenistic, but his *gladius hispaniensis* (from the Necropolis at Pitre) is Roman issue, as is his shield decorated with the star symbol of ‘the fortune of Caesar’. This *clipeus,* probably of wood covered with leather, may be surprising; but 2nd- and 1st-century BC Etruscan reliefs also show this round shield still in use.

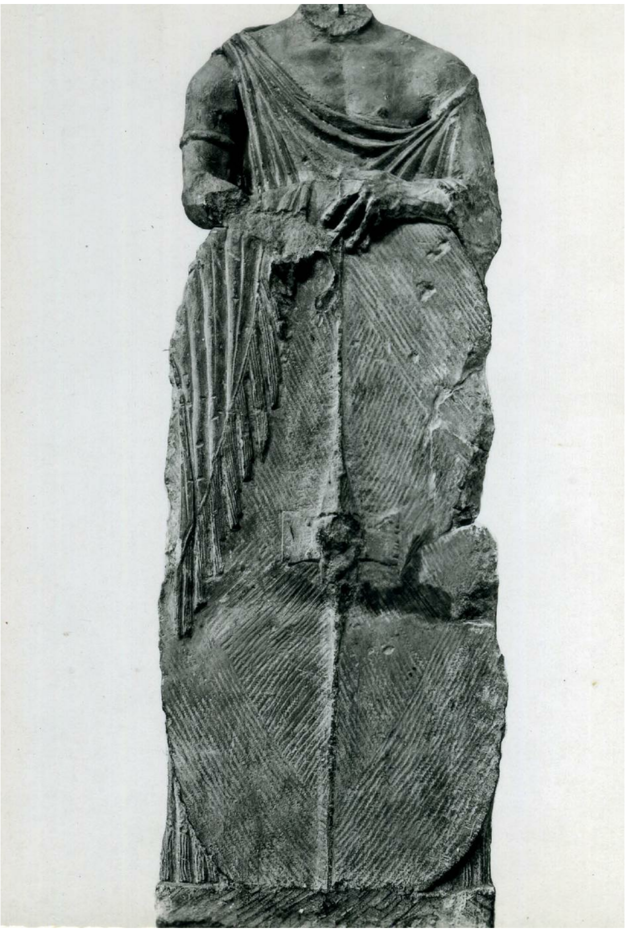
(2) *Miles* of *Legio VI*

This soldier is also reconstructed from a bas-relief at Glanum, erected by a Gallic veteran of Caesar’s army who took part in the battle of Zéla. The legionary is wearing a ‘Buggenum’-type Montefortino helmet adorned with a horsehair crest. His body armour is a coat of ringmail reinforced with shoulder-guards sewn on a leather backing, with pectoral attachments in the form of two separate hooks. His weapons are the *pilum* and the sword, which is shown here suspended on the right, thus actually differing from the soldiers carved on this monument. The ‘wolf-tooth’ decoration on his *scutum* is clearly visible on the bas-relief. Note his coloured sandals.

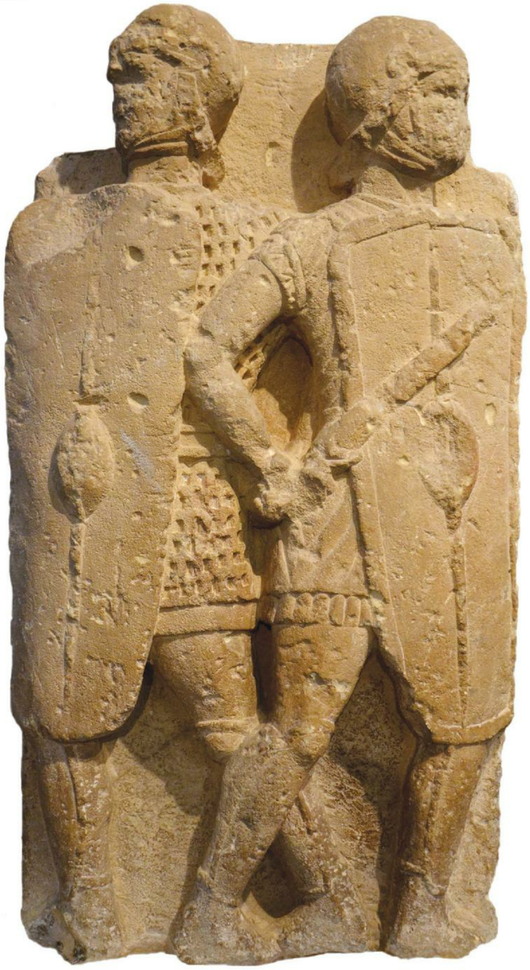
(3) Roman *eques*

Many well-detailed horsemen are sculpted on the Julii monument at Saint-Remy-de-Provence. The soldier’s helmet is a Hellenistic model, adorned with the yellow crest which Arrian described for Roman cavalry. The blue tunic was certainly associated with the cavalry, as shown on Etruscan urns and attested by various literary and other iconographic sources. The sword is slung on his left side from a baldric. The horseman wears a knotted fabric girdle, and his shield is a wooden cavalry *parma*.

Other fragments of a Roman shield have been found at the sanctuary of Gurzufskoe Sedlo in Crimea, although in the earlier context of the Mithridatic Wars of the first half of the 1st century BC. The metal elements consist of a silvered bronze boss, a bronze and silvered *spina*, and bronze and silvered plates in *labris* and crescent forms. The height of this shield can be estimated at between 1.03 and 1.05m (40.5 and 41.3in).



The 'Warrior of Mondragon' sculpture, 1st century BC. When Celts fought in a phalanx formation (*BG* I, 52), they used the large shield copied by the Romans as the *scutum.* It was made from wooden planks, with a reinforcing spine swelling into a central 'barleycorn' – as shown on this sculpture from Vaucluse, which may represent one of Caesar's Aedui auxiliaries. (Musée Calvet, Avignon; author's photo, 1992, courtesy of the Museum)



This important relief of Romano-Iberian soldiers – traditionally associated with Urso (Osuna) in Spain, but actually found at Estepa – is dated to the first half of the 1st century BC. Immediately noticeable are the *scuta* shields of combined trapezoidal/oval shape, the one on the right with complete metal edging. Note also the close-fitting helmets, the greaves, and the two types of body armour. The left man wears a ringmail *gallica*, while his comrade's thigh shows slanting lines suggesting a quilted fabric armour, worn over a *subarmalis* with *pteryges* – see **Plate D1**. (Museo Arquéologico Provincial, Cordoba; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

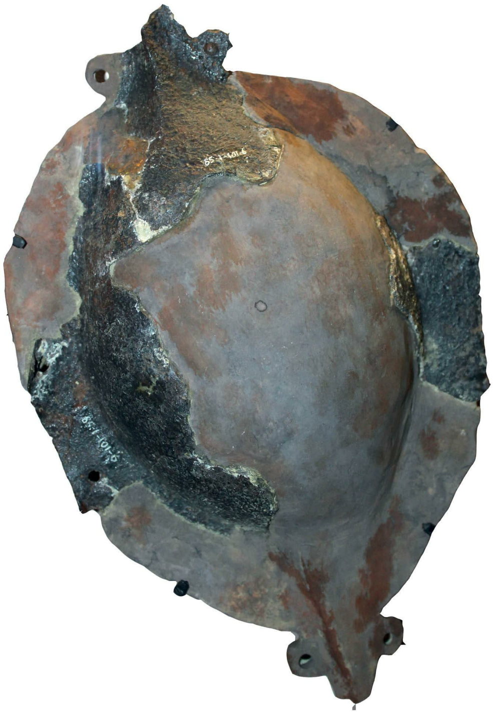
Although this great *scutum* was probably the most used shield, the Romans knew other versions. The reliefs of Urso (Osuna) in Spain show an interesting variation in shape, consisting of a long trapezoidal shield wider at the top, with a lower oval curvature narrowing at the bottom; this type was perhaps of Samnite origin (Livy, IX, 40 – and see photo above).

Writing in *c.* 380 AD of the 'ancient legion', Vegetius (*Epit.* II, 18) tells us that 'to prevent soldiers straying from their comrades in the confusion of battle, they painted different signs for different cohorts on their shields, *digmata* as they call them, and it is customary to do this even now'. Such identifications were already known in Caesar's time (*BG* VII, 45, 7). Legio X bore Taurus the bull, Caesar's zodiacal sign, as a *deigmaton* or sometimes a *signum*. The presence of *digmata* on the shields of Legio X is recorded in the African campaign (*BA* XVI, 3). On that occasion a soldier of the Tenth says to Labienus: 'I'm not a recruit, but a veteran of the Tenth Legion', to which Labienus retorts: 'I don't recognise the emblems of the Tenth.' Since the general is speaking to a single soldier, the expression *signa decumanorum* must logically refer not to the unit's standards but to the man's shield identifications. The shield was furnished with a leather cover *(tegimen)*, remembered by Caesar on other occasions (*BG* II, 21); this might also display the legion's symbol, but more certainly its number.

Caesar also mentions the names of commanders being inscribed on shields (*BAL* LVIII, 3: 'and his troops acknowledged it to the extent that they had the name of Gn. Pompeius carved on their shields'). The practice had already been mentioned by Quintilianus (*Decl.*, III, 216) for the soldiers of Gaius Marius. It was probably not a rule for all soldiers, becoming regular only (Dio Cass. LXVII, 10, I) on the introduction by Tettius Julianus, consul in 83 AD, of the custom of inscribing on the shield the soldier's name and that of his centurion.

From his Spanish campaign, Caesar remembers the shield devices of two soldiers 'shining in chiselled metal' (*BH* XXV, 7: '*insignia scutorumque praefulgens opus caelatum*'). According to Suetonius, Caesar wished his soldiers' equipment to be decorated in gold and silver inlay, both for its psychological impact on the enemy and because soldiers were braver if they were afraid of losing their rich equipment (Suet., *Caes.*, LXVII). Robinson has suggested that this only applied to his favourite Tenth Legion, and that other units perhaps displayed copper and bronze inlays. Different fragments excavated at Alesia in 1864 included both bosses and metallic sheets shaped like flames; these constituted both decoration and reinforcement for shields, although some scholars identify them as Celtic rather than Roman.

Thunderbolts and lightnings began to appear on Roman shields as metallic appliqués. On some Caesarean coins similar shield devices are visible presented as 8- or 5-point stars. Antonucci convincingly suggests that this represents the *sidus Iulium*, i.e. the favourable star of the Julii under which Caesar was born. A little-known section of the Palestrina mosaic (whose dating is debatable between the end of the 2nd and the end of the 1st century BC) shows a legionary shield hung on a pillar. The shield has a white field, a black blazon and a yellow rim, perhaps representing copper, iron and bronze. These colours are also mentioned in descriptions of the Spanish War.

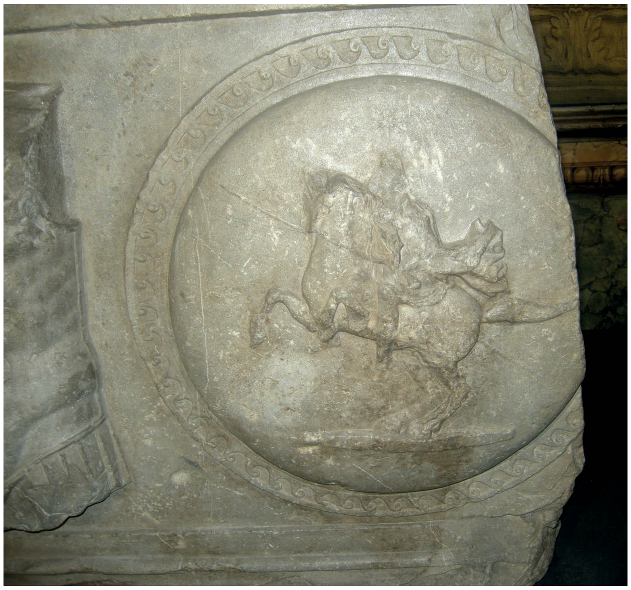


Shield boss *(umbo)* of ‘almond-shell’ shape, 40s BC, from Clos du Verbe Incarné, France. (Musée Gallo-Romain de Fourvière, Lyon; author’s photo, courtesy of the Museum)

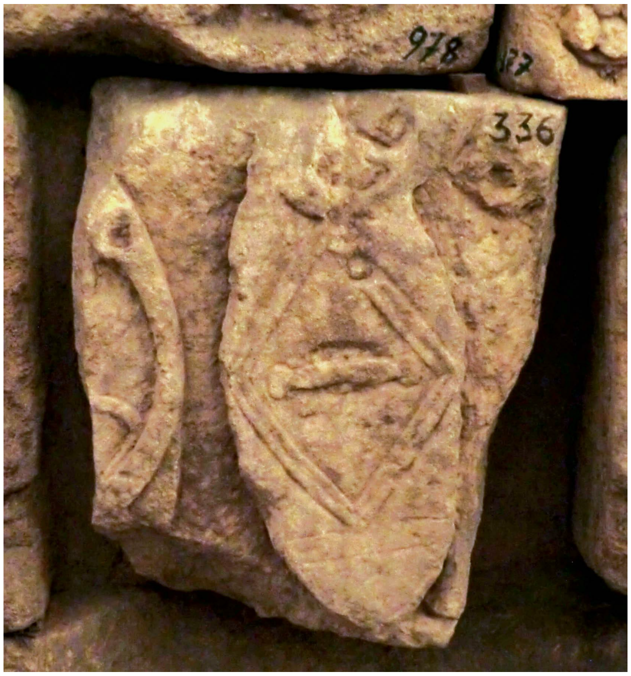
The *clipeus*

The old round metal *clipeus* of Greek origin, widely employed by Romans of the Early Consular period, was still used, but was now mainly reserved for officers; richly decorated forms are suggested by monuments at Glanum and elsewhere. Officers’ *clipeii* were often chiselled or embossed with the heads of protective divinities. In the ‘House of the Impluvium’ in Pompeii similar shields are painted with a silvered surface, and other Pompeian frescoes show a shining bronze surface with Hellenic blazons. Certainly such shields might be carried for ceremonial occasions, but this does not exclude their more practical use. We often read of shields being presented as rewards.

During the battle of the Sabis, Caesar took the *scutum* of a soldier because he did not have his own (*BG* II, 25). According to the definitions of Festus (*De Ver*., 332, 449), the etymology of *scutum* suggests that it meant a shield covered in leather, in contrast to the metallic *clipeus*. The former term has the same root as *scortum*, and in fact Σχϋ̋τος in Greek means ‘skin’.



1st-century BC sculpted image of a *clipeus* shield bearing the motif of a *dioscurus* (one of the 'heavenly twins' Castor and Pollux), from the Campidoglio monument, Rome; see **Plate B3.** (Musei Capitolini, Sezione Montemartini, Rome; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)



Detail from a late 1st-century BC figurative monument found in Gallia Narbonensis, representing the interior of an oval shield. Note the diamond-shaped decoration, as well as the horizontal grip across the hollow central boss; see **Plate D3**. (Musée Lapidaire, Narbonne, inv. 949; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

EQUIPMENT OF *SOCII* AUXILIARIES

The many types of allied troops which fought alongside Caesar’s legions in the Gallic and Civil Wars often carried their own weaponry and equipment, in addition to items supplied from Roman arsenals.

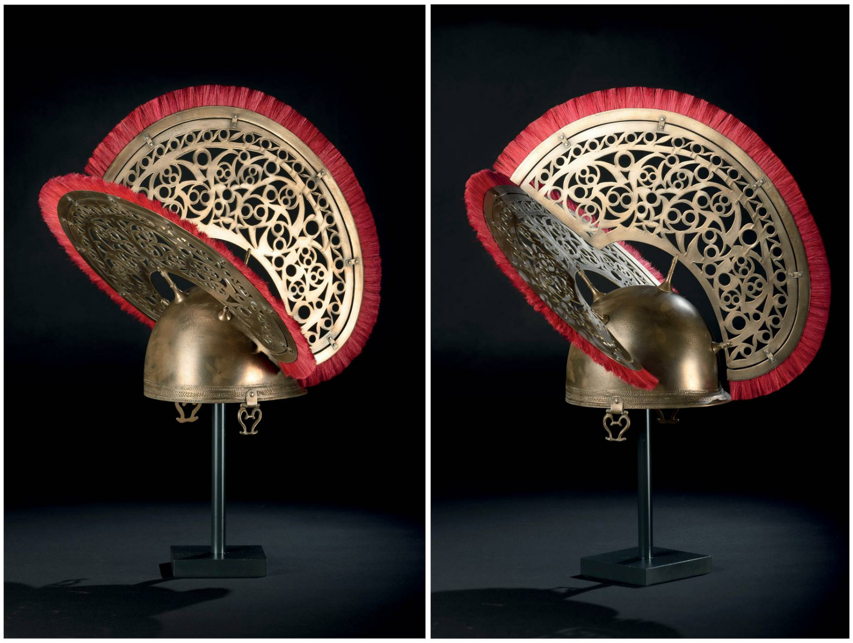
Germanics

The Germanic shafted weapon was the short *framea.* This was reportedly heavy; it often bore symbols inscribed on the blade, which, according to the hypothesis of Gustav Kleimm, would have been barbed. Tacitus (*Germania* XL, IV) mentions some use of short swords *(breves gladii),* and round shields *(rotunda scuta)* often painted in colours. The use of helmets and body armour was very rare (*Germania* VI), but protection was provided by garments called *rhenones*, made of wild animal skins and (supposedly) reinforced with fish skin: ‘They choose certain wild beasts, and, having flayed them, decorate their hides with many spots, as also with the scales of monsters from the deep’ (see also Varro, *DLL*, V, 167).

Celts

Caesar mentions (*BG* I, 26) the use by the Celts of *matara* and *gaesa* javelins having ‘sharp and wavy’ points, and of long spears called *tragula* (*BG* V, 48) fitted with an *amentum* throwing-strap wrapped around the shaft. Specimens of *matarae* were found at Alesia. The typical sword of the Celtic warrior was the long-bladed La Tène III type, of which many specimens, complete with their iron scabbards, have been found on the same battlefield. These were usually slung from chains, but Gauls serving with the Roman army also used *cingula*, as shown on the famous statue of the auxiliary cavalryman from Vachères. The grave of the auxiliary ‘Horseman of the Senate Well’ in Paris yielded a simple belt fastened with a buckle but without facing plates.

Celtic shields were furnished either with a round boss (which seems to have first appeared during the Gallic War, via auxiliaries coming from Eastern Europe), or with a wooden *spina* reinforced with metal fittings and a central ‘butterfly’ *umbo*. Metallic appliqués were often used to reinforce and decorate the shields, which were colourfully painted. Many shields captured at Alesia were ‘adorned with gold and silver’ (Plutarch, *Caes*., XXVII). The distinction between equipment for parade and battle did not exist in the ancient world; every warrior going to war showed off his finest gear to his adversaries. The Gauls sought to impress their enemies with their tall stature and hairstyles, their adornments and fine equipment, as well as by the *tumultus gallicus*, the noise produced by the clash of arms and the blowing of war-trumpets.



Reconstruction by Novium Museum, Chichester, of the so-called ‘mystery warrior’ helmet excavated in 2008 at North Bersted, West Sussex, by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd (see **Plate B2**). The two intricately-pierced curved bronze sheets are fitted at a forward slant and vertically to form an elaborate right-angled crest. The crescent-shaped sheet runs laterally across the top of the head, meeting at 90o the second asymmetric sheet running down the back. Both are topped with a U-section gutter which must have held some kind of pluming – perhaps horsehair, feathers or boar-bristles. (Novium Museum, Chichester, photos courtesy Drs Amy Roberts & Portia Tremlett)

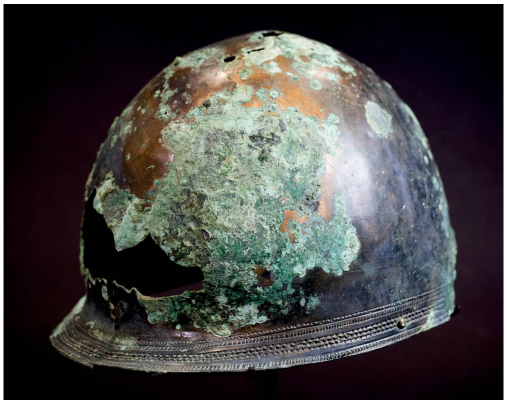
Balearics

Helmets and armours are not mentioned for the famous Balearic slingers, employed by Roman armies since the time of the Punic Wars. They probably fought in tunics and cloaks, perhaps with leg wrappings made from esparto fibre. The earliest representation of how they carried their sling bullets dates from the Trajanic period, but they presumably used the same methods as Rhodians and Thessalians, carrying ammunition either in a pouch slung from the shoulder or in a bagged fold of the cloak.

Cretans

The *Cretae sagittarii* formed the elite core of archers in Roman armies, and their equipment is represented on a coin of Metellus Scipio minted during the

Civil War. This shows a simple helmet of Coolus-Mannheim type with a short neck-guard, a tunic of quilted material, a short dagger, a bow and a curved quiver *(pharetra)* probably also serving as a bow-case (Prop., *El.,* IV, 6, 55). Among 40 arrowheads found at Alesia three specimens were definitely identified as Roman: their points have a quadrangular section, presenting one or two barbs. The Roman arrowheads found in Gaul are of iron, with dimensions varying around 7.8cm long and 2.5cm wide (*c.* 3in x 1in). The Urso excavations in Spain have produced various tapered or swallow-tailed arrow points, although it was not unusual for Roman archers to use barbed Gallic heads.



Right three-quarter rear view of the original Coolus helmet of the North Bersted 'mystery warrior'; it was only the fourth of this basic pattern so far discovered in Britain. The bronze helmet is of simple domed shape, the rim being decorated with a hatched and punched pattern. (Novium Museum, Chichester, photo courtesy Drs Amy Roberts & Portia Tremlett)

Iberians

The Hispanic infantry comprised both *scutati*, recruited in Hibernia Citerior (northern Spain) and equipped with a big *scutum,* and from the south lighter *caetrati* enlisted in Hibernia Ulterior who carried round leather shields. Besides the iron *soliferrum* they used the *lancea*, a light spear having a head up to 50cm (19.5in) long, as also employed by Celtic cavalry (*BG* VIII, 48: Volusenus, *praefectus equitum* of Antonius, is wounded in the thigh by the *lancea* of a Gallic horseman). The *falcata* or *machaira* sword was derived from a Greek prototype but had been perfected by the excellent Celtiberian swordsmiths. Its single-edged blade, of slightly curved shape, was worn in a leather scabbard with bronze fittings hanging from a baldric, and the pommel was often shaped as an animal-head.

Greeks

The splendour of officers' equipment is recorded in paintings from Pompeii, showing late Attic-type helmets with red crests and plumes, bronze muscled cuirasses, and shields shining in silver and gold. (For example, a painting in Regio I represents the fight for the body of Patroclus; and one in Regio VII shows helmets, swords and shields of Greek typology, together with mail armour, in a context of gladiatorial trophies.)

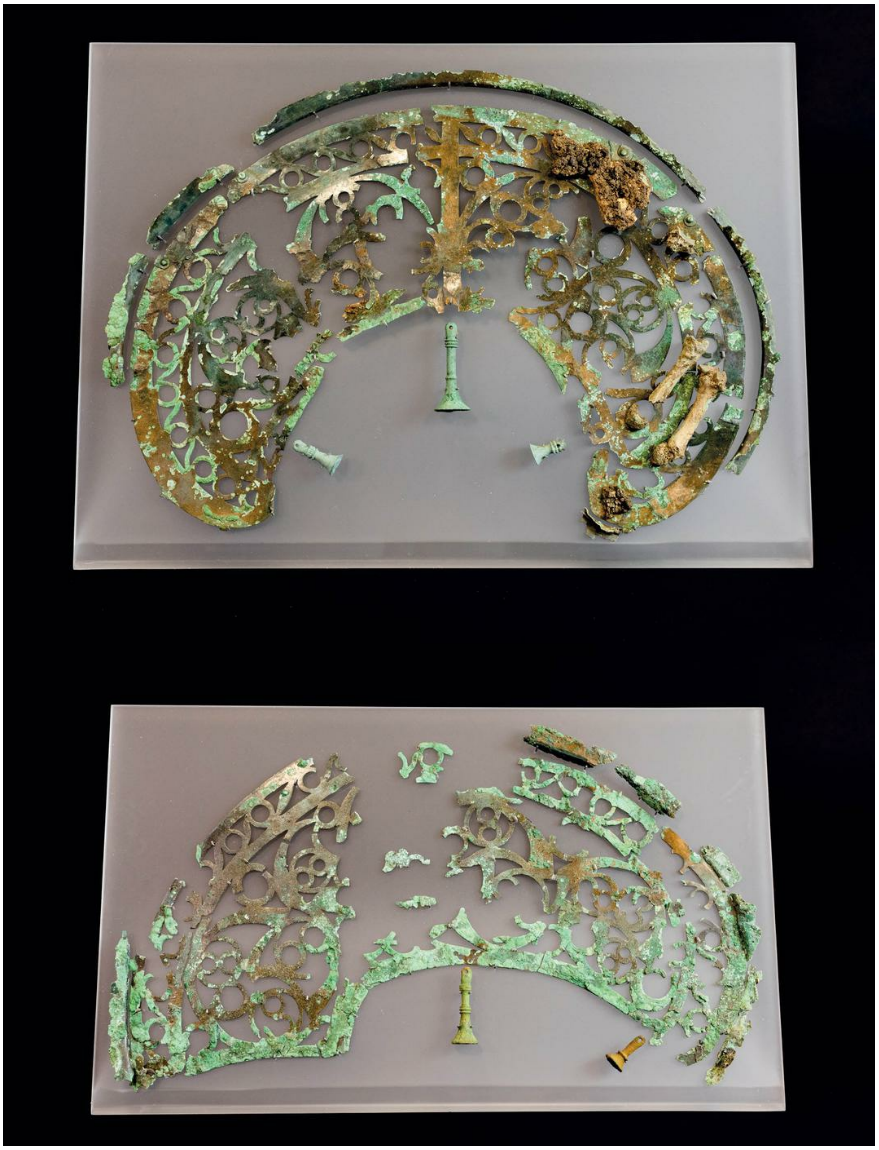
OTHER EQUIPMENT

Standards

Pliny the Elder (*HN*, X, 5, 16) states that Marius, during his second consulship in 104 BC, replaced the old standards *(signa)* of individual legions – the wolf, minotaur, horse, boar and bull – with the single legionary emblem of the eagle *(aquila)*. The claws of the eagle, holy to Jupiter, usually clutched a pedestal, while the wings were outspread. Cicero (*In Cat.*, I, 9, 24) remembers it as fashioned in silver; this is confirmed by Pliny the Elder, who remarks that all the *signa* were in silver so that they were visible shining from afar (see also *BA* LXXV, 5).

The eagles of Caesar's army as represented on coins are shaped in two ways, one of them featuring a small laurel wreath in the beak. The standard shaft has a side-handle, and is decorated with small discs *(phalerae)*. The legion's eagle was flanked by other *signa militaria*. Each legion had its flag *(vexillum)*. Dio Cassius (XL, 18) describes that of Crassus at the battle of Carrhae as embroidered with the name of the legion and of the commander, in purple letters, often in archaic Latin. Antonucci therefore suggests a white or light red field for such *vexilla,* raised in front of the praetorian tent of the Imperator as the signal for war. Historians also refer to the *vexillum* as a purple tunic or *phoinikon chitòn* fluttering in front of the commander's tent (Plut., *Pomp.*, LXVIII; *Fab. Max.*, XV).

Signa existed for the maniple and also for the cohort (*BG* II, 25, 2; VI, 34), evidence of the latter already existing in Caesar's time being provided by coins. One coin representing the *signa* of Crassus recovered by Augustus in 20 BC shows a number 'X' represented on a *vexillum*, which must refer to a *cohors*. Each legion had ten cohorts, 30 maniples and 60 centuries. Considering that we have express mention of 30 or 31 *signa* for each legion from various authors (*Serv. Aen.*, XI, 463: 'the standard-bearers of the maniples, which according to ancient custom [numbered] 30 in the legion'), the 31 should refer to the 30 *signa manipulorum* plus the eagle.



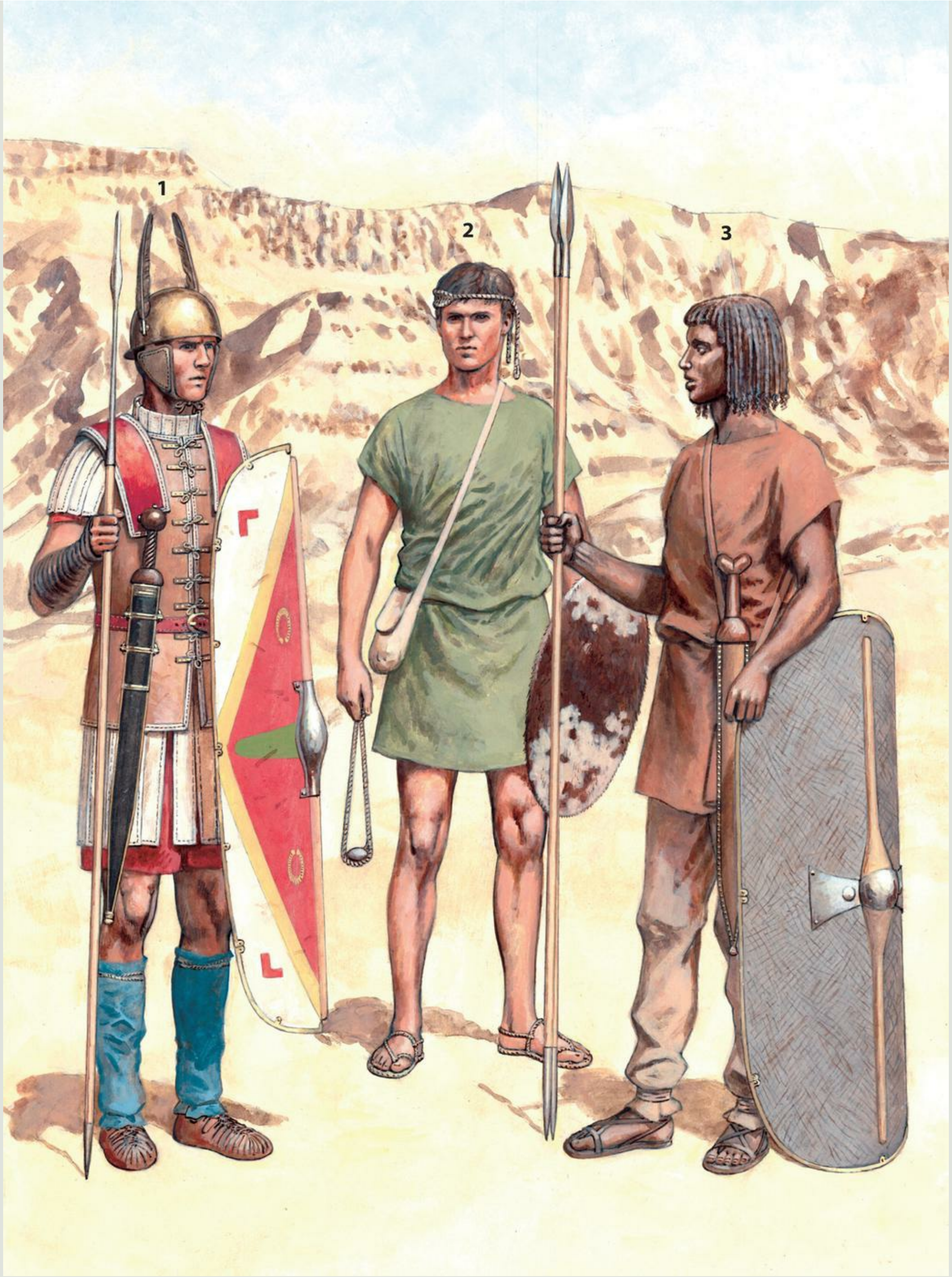
The unique original crests of the 'mystery warrior' helmet; the style of the bronze openwork has some echoes in various Gallic finds. The five cylindrical attachment mounts for the crests were found separately in the grave. (Novium Museum, Chichester, photo courtesy Drs Amy Roberts & Portia Tremlett)

Roman cast-lead sling bullets *(glandes)* found on the battlefield of Alesia, 52 BC. Other examples were made in pottery or stone. Some missiles were inscribed with threatening slogans, or with the name of a commander – for instance, one bullet found at Alesia bore the name of Caesar's deputy Titus Labienus. (Musée Alésia; Conseil Départemental de la Côte-d'Or, fonds Société des Sciences de Semur; photo François Perrodin)

Caesar's three legions and three praetorian cohorts at Dyrrachium (*BC*, III, 69,71) lost 32 standards, so about one-third of the total of ensigns. After the victory of Pharsalus, 180 captured standards and nine eagles were brought to Caesar (*BC* III, 99, 4). We know from the sources that Pompey arrayed 12 legions in this battle, so the number of captures does not correspond to all their standards, but to a multiple of 30, taken from between six and nine legions.

To introduce an identification at cohort level would have been logical, given the tactical development of the legion. If this was a separate ensign, then the sources would speak of 40 rather than 30 standards for each legion. It is therefore possible that, within each cohort, one of the three *signa manipulorum* (perhaps that of the senior *triarii*) simultaneously acted as the standard of the whole cohort, being distinguished by a small *vexillum* or *tabulum* displaying its number. (An auxiliary cohort's *tabulum* bearing its designation survives from the 1st century AD.) Even after the regular introduction of cohorts and centuries as administrative units in the Late Consular period after the reforms of Marius, the basic tactical unit remained the maniple consisting of two centuries, united under one *signum.* Mommsen proposed the existence of *signa* of centuries, but in Caesar's commentaries (*BG* VI, 34, 6; 40, 1) the terms *signa* and *manipuli* are treated as synonymous. Therefore, if the legion of the late 1st century BC had about 30 *signa,* some manipular standards must simultaneously have served as *signa cohortium*.

G AFRICAN WAR, 47–45 BC



(1) *Miles* of *Legio Gallica Alaudae*

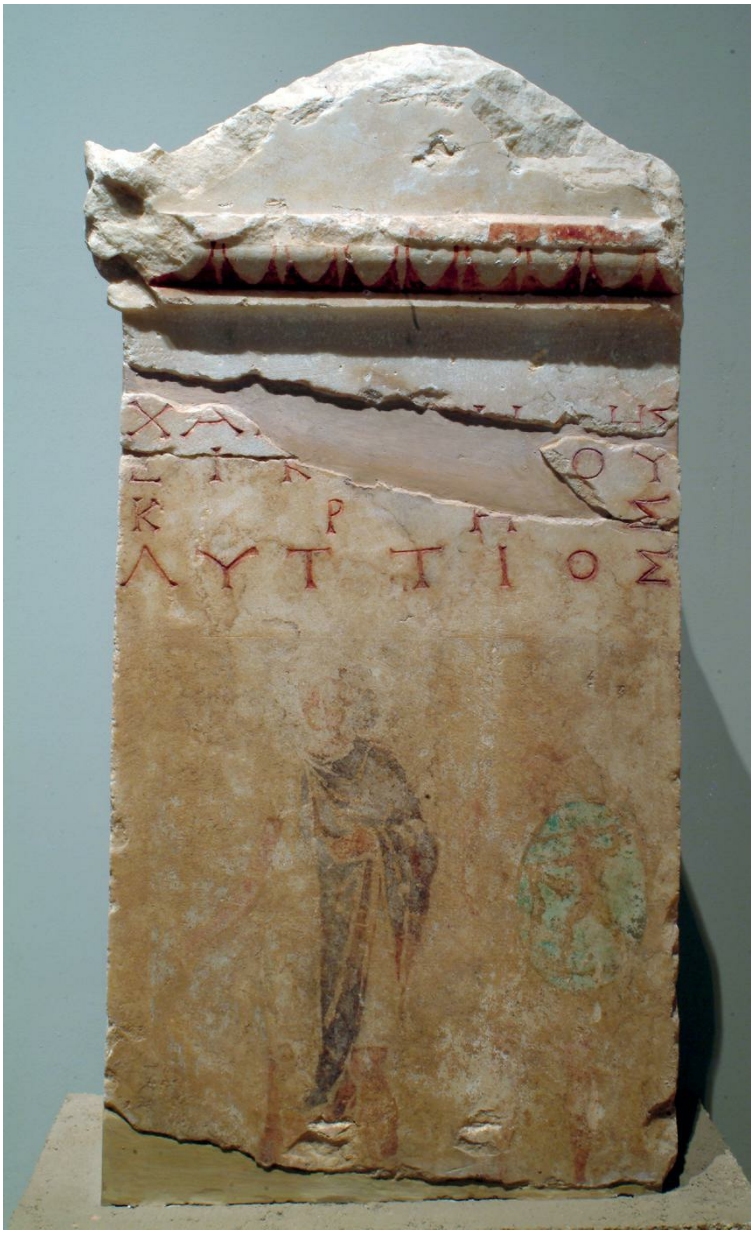
The Alaudae legion was hastily raised in Transalpine Gaul from non-citizens; we reconstruct its costume and equipment as including Gallic elements. When it was necessary to equip new troops quickly it would certainly have been faster and cheaper to make leather body armour than to provide thousands of coats of mail. Hooks of the same model as those used on the later *lorica segmentata* have been found in France in Caesarean archaeological contexts; there are many possibilities for their use, but one can assume that organic cuirasses might have had such locking fitments. The *manica* protection on his right forearm is identical to that worn by gladiators at the time. The sword is based on an example from Fontillet, and the motif of the shield on a Glanum bas-relief. On the same monument the legionaries wear side-feathers on their helmets; these may perhaps have been a distinction of this legion, which bore the nickname ‘Larks’.

(2) Iberian Balearic slinger

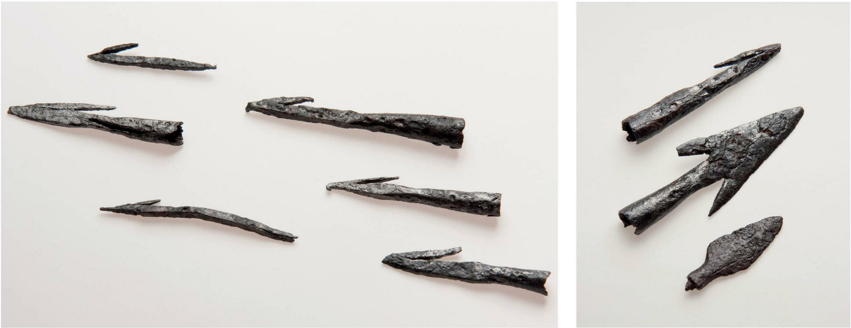
Caesar already writes of his Balearic slingers during the conquest of Gaul. In North Africa this specialist light infantryman wears a local tunic, leather or rope sandals, and might also have a cloak to cover him during the cold nights. He carries his deadly stone or cast-lead sling bullets in a satchel, and two or more slings in case one breaks in battle – note that he has tied a spare around his head. His shield has a goatskin cover, as mentioned by Diodorus Siculus.

(3) Numidian auxiliary

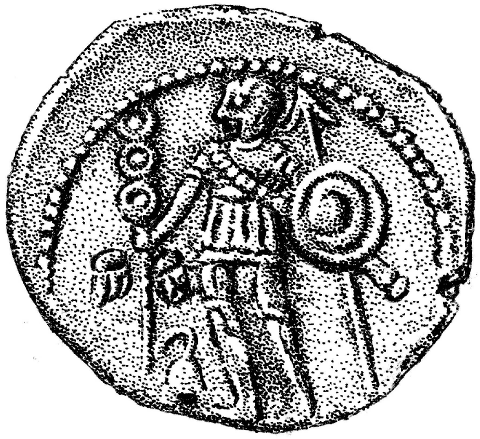
Caesar testifies to the presence of Numidian *velites* (light infantrymen, who skirmished between the battle-lines with javelins) in his Gallic army, and logically those provided by the allied King Bogud would have been even more numerous during the African campaign. Lightly equipped, they could move much faster than legionaries. This skirmisher has practically no body protection, except for a shield covered with thick elephant hide. It is not certain whether such auxiliaries also carried swords, but we have armed our man with a *gladius* found in the Es-Soumâa tomb in Algeria.



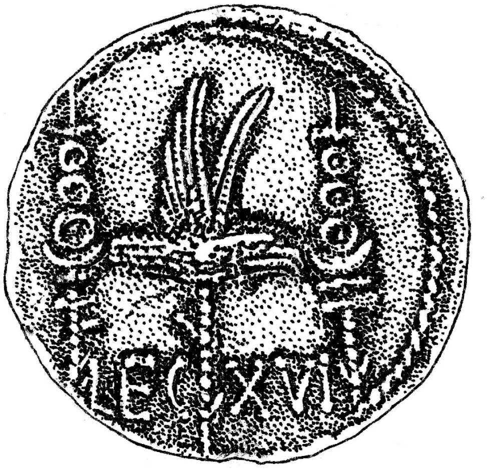
The stele of Chaironides from Lyttos, Crete, 3rd–2nd century BC. This interesting stele shows (right) one of the possible *deigmata* used on their shields by Cretan archers. The motif of the god Poseidon/Neptune (left?) is also seen on coins of the 2nd-century Hellenistic king Demetrios II, who formed an army of Cretan mercenaries. (Volos Museum A8, photo courtesy of Dr Maria Stamatopolou)



Roman arrow points, 52 BC, recovered at Alesia; many examples are ‘single-hooked’ and some fully barbed. (Musée Alésia, Conseil Départemental de la Côte-d’Or, fonds Société des Sciences de Semur; photo François Perrodin)



Celtic coin of the Gallic leader Apasnactos, an ally of Caesar, second half of 1st century BC. It represents a Roman standard-bearer, reconstructed as **Plate A3**. (Drawing by Florent Vincent)



Silver *denarius* representing the standards of Legio XVI, one of those raised by Caesar in 44 BC in anticipation of a Parthian war. Flanking the *aquila* are two *signa* decorated with *phalerae, lunulae* and *coronae*; the tips are probably spearheads, perhaps above *tabulae* inscribed with cohort designations? (Drawing by Florent Vincent)

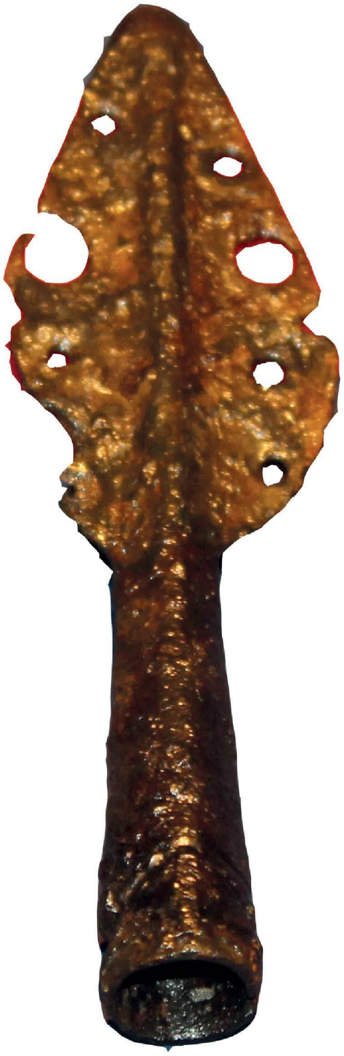
The *signum* shaft was furnished with some combination of ribbons, tufts, round medallions *(phalerae)*, crowns (wreaths), and half-moons (*lunulae* or *cornicula*). A metal ferrule allowing the butt to be driven into the ground is shown on coins. The finial of the shaft of manipular standards is shown as an open hand, but that of *vexilla* and later Imperial praetorian cohort standards as a spearhead; Suetonius may mean either the latter or the ferrule when he mentions (*Caes.,* LXII) an episode when Caesar threatened fugitives with the *cuspis* (point) of a *signum*. It was considered very shameful to lose a standard in battle: sometimes an officer might throw one into the enemy's lines, to incite his soldiers to advance and recover it (*BG* V, 37; *BC* III, 64).

During the 1st century BC few sources or images attest to a particular uniform for the standard-bearers *(signiferi),* such as the animal pelts worn later. A coin minted by Caesar's Arvernian ally Apasnactos represents a Roman standard-bearer; it indicates waist-length body armour above *pteryges*, a small shield *(parmula),* greaves, and a crested helmet at his feet. The *socii* had their own *signa*, like the tribal boar represented on the coins of Dumnorix, an anti-Roman chief of the Aedui. The shafts of such standards were often painted with bright colours.

Musical instruments

Roman military instruments of the period were the *cornu, tuba* and *buccina*. The *cornu* was a widely-curved bronze horn of Etruscan origin (Atheneus, *Deipn.*, IV, P. 184 A), derived from the shape of the horn of the ancient ox; it was carried curled around the *cornicen*'s shoulder and torso, with a cross-brace for his hand (Varro, *DLL*,V, 24, 117). The *tuba* was a straight bronze funnel-shaped trumpet perhaps as much as 1.47cm (58in) long. The *buccina* seems to have resembled the *cornu* but in a smaller size and without the cross-brace.

Lucanus remembers the hoarse sound of the *cornu* and the deep and thundering call of the *tuba* (*Phars.*, I, 237–238). The *tuba* call summoned the troops to assemble for battle, for the march, to their work, and for guard duties *(vigiliae)* (*BG* VII, 47; *BC* III, 46), as well as giving the signal to strike their tents (Luc., *Phars*. X, 400–401). The *buccina* signalled night guard duties (*BC* II, 35); according to Varro (*DLL*, VI, 75), its sound could be compared to human song.



Celto-Roman ‘standard spearhead’ from Noricum, 50 BC. (Schloss Deutschlandsberg Museum; author’s photo, courtesy of the Museum)

Cavalry equipment

The cavalryman’s main weapon was a long *hasta* or *doru* lance*,* but he also carried a sword. This might be the *gladius hispaniensis* or a longer blade; one found at Alesia measures 68cm (26.8in), with an iron scabbard terminating in a round chape decorated with volutes. This is clearly an evolution from Celtic La Tène III swords.

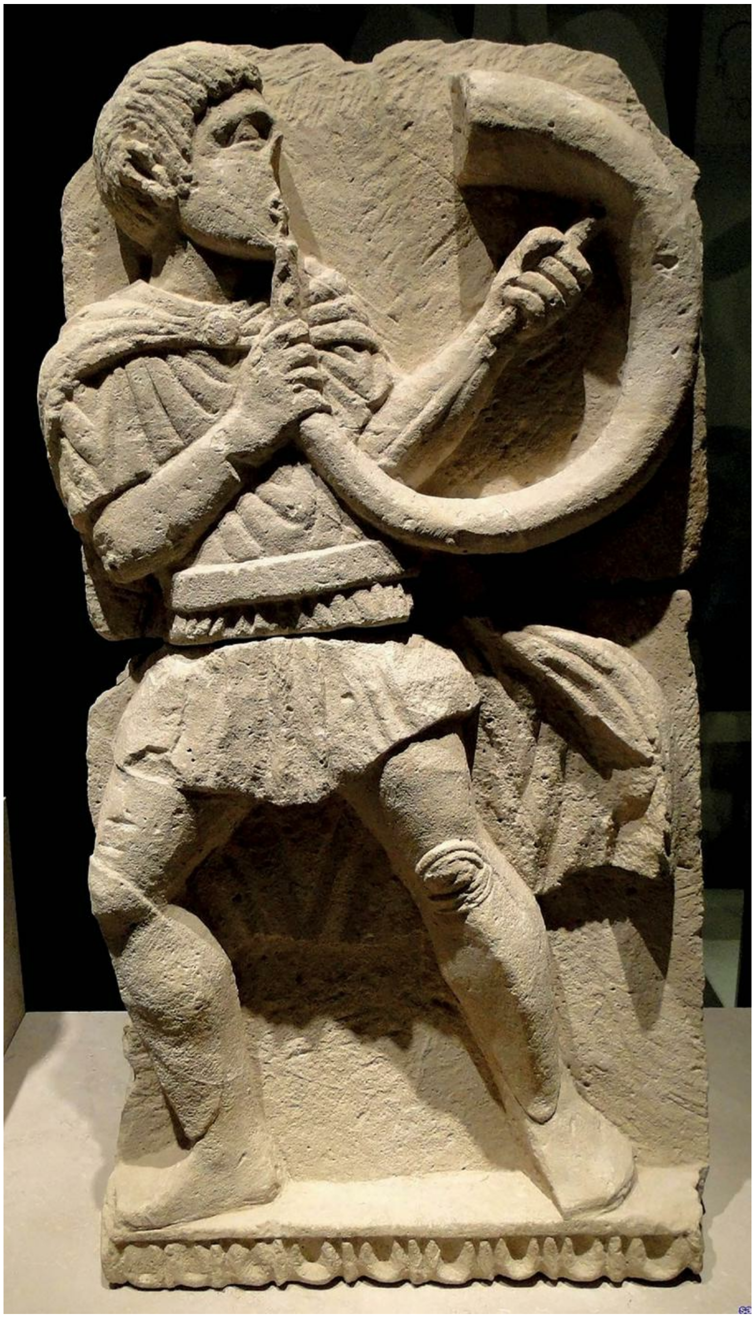
The typical cavalry shield was the round wooden or hide *parma*, about 80cm (31.5in) in diameter, as mentioned by Sallustius (*Hist*., IV, 4). It is visible on a monument from Via Latina, probably commemorating a Roman cavalry officer. This shows two *equites* – equipped with wide helmets of Agen/Port or Novo Mesto types, spears, and the traditional *parma equestris* –

fighting Germanic warriors. On the left side of the battle scene is a *gladius* or *parazonium*, whose shape is very similar to a Celtiberian prototype, and on the right side a muscle cuirass. This was the typically Hellenistic equipment of a cavalry officer, as shown in the fresco from the 'Fabius Rufus House' at Pompeii, where the sword has a bilobate pommel and a white-painted hilt and scabbard presumably representing ivory.

Many officers used the *parma* as an alternative to the heavier *clipeus* when on horseback. However, we read more often of Caesar and other senior officers using the long infantry *scutum* (*BC* II, 35: *scutum* used by the Pompeian legate Publius Attius Varus to ward off the blow of a Caesarean soldier). The display of commanders' names on cavalry shields is also mentioned, and some Augustan coins show that of Caesar and his *sidum Julium* 'lucky star' marked on cavalry *parmae*.

The evidence for cavalry helmets suggests several types in addition to the Celtic models mentioned above. Caesar uses the term *cassis* (*BG* VII, 45), probably implying a heavier type. The Glanum reliefs show Roman cavalry using Hellenistic helmets, very similar to actual specimens preserved in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and to sculptures on the Pergamon Altar. These models were distinguished by a horizontal neck-guard and a skull embossed with a diadem, echoing late-Attic and Boeotian types.

The Glanum reliefs show the use of both Hellenistic linen and short metal cuirasses. Both types might be painted in rich colours, as shown on Etruscan urns of the 2nd–1st century BC. Sometimes this armour was worn decoratively together with a Greek *exomis* tunic which left the right shoulder uncovered. This style had been fashionable in the Diadochoi armies, and the tunic was sometimes draped over the cuirass, as on the metopae of the mausoleum of Munatius Plancus at Gaeta. Its colour was carmine red over faded purple, sometimes with a faded purple silk *zona militaris* knotted on the breast (Lydus, *De Mag*. ii.13), as attested by a painting from Pompeii. The metal Hellenistic corselet was distinctive of senior commanders fighting from horseback; it was often associated with *pteryges,* and bore a gorgon mask on the breast.



Stele of a *cornicen* hornist, 1st century BC, from southern Spain. (Museo de Osuna; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

In the artistic sources various horse harnesses are visible, depending upon the wealth of the rider. The four-horned saddle began to appear in the Roman cavalry during the 1st century BC, and the reliefs of Glanum are among the earliest monuments to show it. The saddlecloth *(ephippium)* was imported from Greece (Cicero, *De Fin. Bon. et Mal.,* III, 15), and was much more decorative than useful for the cavalryman. A painting in the 'House of the Cryptoportic' in Pompeii shows an interesting period example.

Protective elements for the horse are visible on monuments. The Capitolium monument shows a rich Greek-type *prometopion* (frontal or chamfron) for the horse muzzle, with a transverse horsehair crest falling down the sides. A Romano-Etruscan cavalryman from a Volterra urn shows a large fringed protective *peytral* for his horse's chest, probably of leather, and very similar to contemporary Hellenistic harnesses; the red colour is still visible on the alabaster sculpture.

Strabo considers the Gauls, in particular the Belgae, as the best cavalry in the Roman army (*Geogr.,* IV, 2–3), and their high quality led to their permanent introduction as *auxilia*. The Celtic cavalryman carried his long *scutum* on horseback, and the metopae of Munatius Plancus in Gaeta show it as either trapezoidal, hexagonal or oval. The funerary stone of G. Pompullius from northern Italy shows Celtic auxiliary cavalry with two standards, and their horse harness decorated with *phalerae*. The sword is worn on the left side, and both a round *parma* and a trapezoidal *scutum* are in evidence. The riders wear helmets of Agen/Port and Coolus-Mannheim typology, and on the Glanum monument these have a high crest and double tufts of horsehair.

Lightly equipped Numidians from North Africa were also widely employed in the Gallic War, fighting as skirmishers on their small, fast horses. According to Strabo they rode bareback, directing their mounts with a small staff. According to Lucanus (*Phars.,* VI, 221; I, 210), the Moors and Numidians fought with javelins *(iacula)* and spears *(lanceae)*, and Strabo mentions *akontia* (lances) in a detailed description of their appearance, dress and weapons (*Geogr.* XVII, 7). The Iberian cavalry used horses similar to the Numidians but having full equipment, complete with *ephippia.*

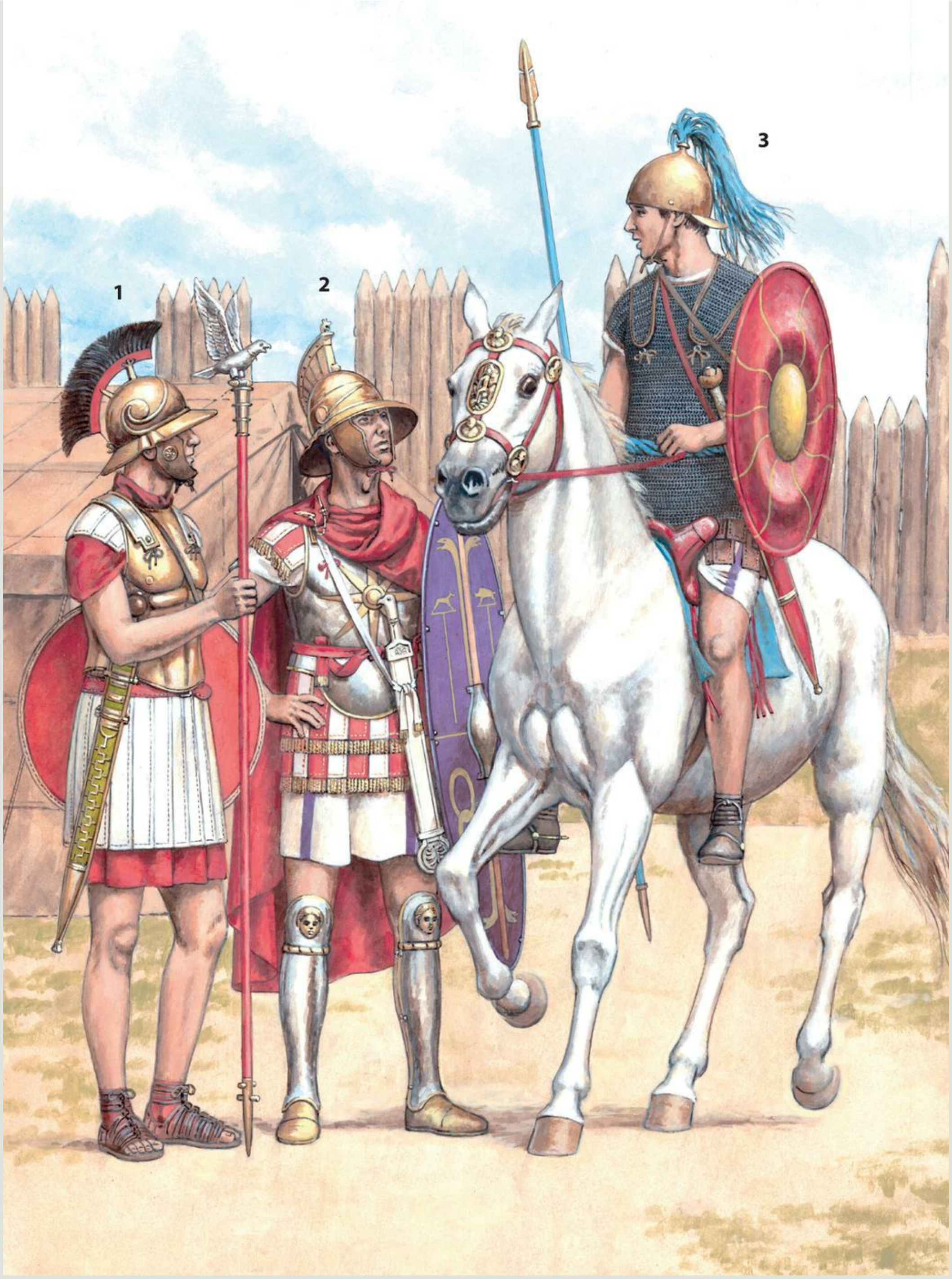
Germanic cavalrymen played an important part in Caesar's armies. The harness of their horses was very simple, sometimes comprising only a decorative collar, like the specimen from Harmstorf; the Germans in fact considered the use of horse housings as effeminate. They preferred Celtic horses (*BG* VII, 70), because their own were ill-shapen and ugly, although accustomed to endurance by daily exercise. Caesar mentions that during cavalry actions the Germans frequently leapt from their horses and fought on foot, while their mounts were perfectly trained to stand exactly where they were left, to which spot the riders retreated when necessity arose (*BG* IV, 2).

In one occasion (*BG* VII, 65) Caesar gave to the Germans the horses of his *tribuni, evocati* and Roman *equites.*

The presence of octagonal shields on the mausoleum of Munatius Plancus is interesting; the same shape is visible (with Celtic or Germanic decorative appliqués and *deigmata*) on the Cecilia Metella mausoleum on the Appian Way just outside Rome, representing in all probability the shields of the Germanic cavalry led by Crassus's son at Carrhae in 53 BC.

Horses were levied in the conquered territories, and Caesar bought mounts for his *equites* in Gallia and Iberia (*BG* VII, 55); at the beginning of the Civil War his wealthy centurions offered to pay for the equipment of *equites* (Suet., *Caes.*, L, XVIII). As mentioned above, on one occasion he ordered Celtic auxiliaries to supply horses to soldiers of Legio X (*BG* I, 62). Pack mules were used as well: at Gergovia, Caesar ordered that muleteers *(muliones)* issued with cavalry helmets *(cassides)* should ride round the hills in the guise of horsemen (*BG* VII, 45).

H STAFF GROUP



(1) Legionary *aquilifer*

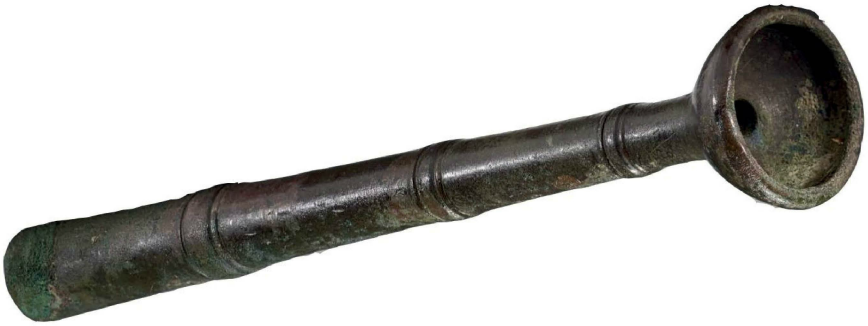
The shape of the silver *aquila* standard is restored from contemporary Roman coins. The *aquilifer* was an important junior officer, whose increased pay allowed him to wear high-quality equipment. His helmet is of a Hellenistic model, with an original crest support. The sources are silent on the question of whether standard-bearers of this date wore animal pelts over their helmets and shoulders, as was later the case. He wears an anatomical bronze *statos* cuirass, and we copy his sword scabbard from a recovered example from Switzerland. He also carries a small round *parma* shield slung from his shoulder.

(2) *Tribunus*

This tribune of the equestrian or 'knightly' social order is recognizable as such by his *augusticlavus* tunic. His equipment is based on that shown on an Etruscan urn from Volterra, Italy. The helmet is copied from a find dated to the end of the 1st century BC which is believed to be gladiatorial, but the iconography suggests that similar models were also in military use. His anatomical iron breastplate is decorated with a large star device, and is worn over a bi-colour *subarmalis*, as shown in a Pompeian painting. His sword is a *parazonium* with an ivory pommel. His shield is copied from that of the officer on the Altar of Ahenobarbus, with a motif from the Caecilia Metella relief; depicting confronting she-wolf and boar standards, it accords with the Gallic War. His red cloak is fastened with two *fibulae* linked with a small chain, discovered near the site of Gergovia and probably a military gift.

(3) *Eques*

Reconstructed from a contemporary Etruscan urn, this cavalryman's status as a Roman equestrian is again attested by his tunic with narrow purple *clavi* vertical-stripes. His helmet is of the so-called 'Buggenum' variety of the Montefortino typology, and his armour is a ringmail *gallica* over a leather garment terminating in *pteryges*. His weapon is a cavalry sword, slung to hang on his left. His hide shield is the *parma equestris*, typical for horsemen of equestrian rank; it has a fabric strap, and we copy its decoration from the Amiternum relief in the Abruzzo region of Italy.

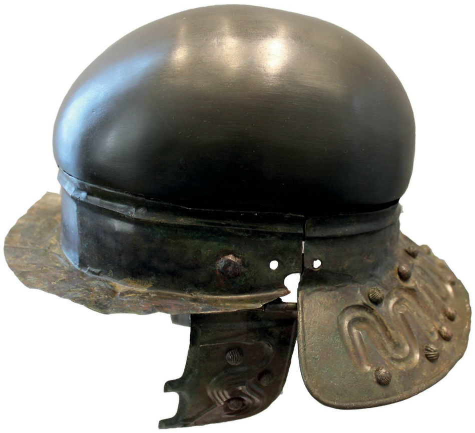


Mouthpiece of a trumpet, possibly 1st century AD; it measures 16.8cm (6.6in) long. While one scholar considers that it is from a *cornu*, it may equally be part of a *tuba*. (British Museum, inv. 1856, 1226.977; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

CLOTHING

At the time of Marius a reference to the 'tunic of Mars' (Quint., *Decl.* II: *Martio habitu horrentem)* confirms that soldiers in battle wore red tunics *(russati)* and that such a tunic was hung up in front of the general's tent as a sign of war (Plut., *Pomp*., LXVIII)). In representations of officers the frequent use of a sky-blue colour (representing shadowed white) might mean that white was indicative of the rank of some officers, at least in Caesar's day (though we should remember that the Romans considered everything sky-coloured *(caeruleus)* as synonymous with heavenly deities, in particular with Venus Genitrix). Blue was also employed for cavalry tunics, in association with Neptune, the heavenly protector of horses.

In the army there was a clear difference between the cloaks worn by the simple *milites gregarii* and the officers *(paludati)* who wore the *paludamentum* (*BC* I, 6). The latter was a woollen draped cloak fastened on the right shoulder with a gold *fibula* (Pl. *HN*, XXXIII, 12). Q. Caecilius Scipio, commander of the Pompeian forces in Africa, wore a purple cloak (*BA* LVII, 54–56), the usual colour for a commander-in-chief, although in Scipio's case it was described as a *sagulum*, i.e. a small soldier's cloak (see below). To avoid problems over precedence with the allied King Juba, who was accustomed to wearing red, Scipio changed the colour of his dress to white *(albus)*. White might therefore also have been indicative of legates in the Late Consular period. Plutarch called the fringed cloak of Lucullus by its Greek name *krossenos ephestris,* and a similar mantle is visible on the Munatius Plancus statue in Tivoli. The *sagum* or *sagulum gregalis* of the common *milites* (these terms implying different sizes) was a squared cloth of heavy wool, draped and fastened with a fibula at the right shoulder. Etruscan urns of the 1st century BC often represent such military cloaks, in varying colours; for hunting activities we see green versions, edged with yellow for officers.

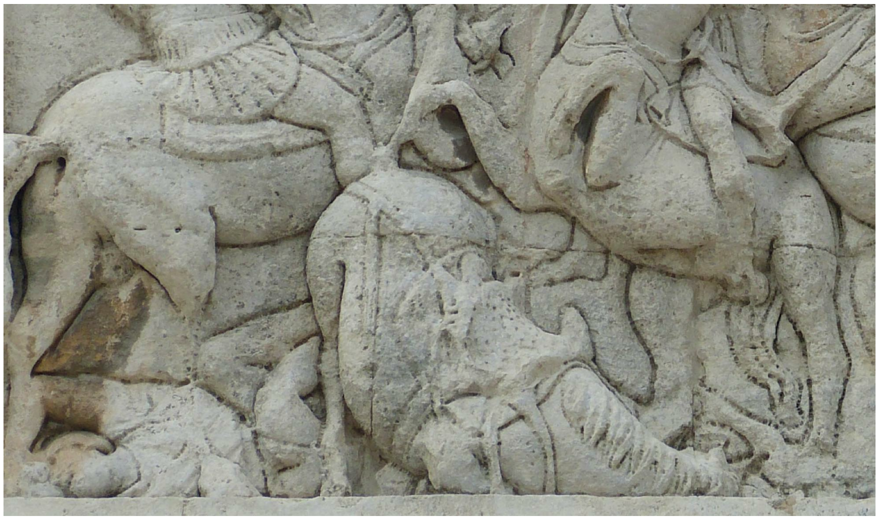


1st-century BC bronze helmet of Novo Mesto typology, from a Roman auxiliary cavalryman's grave at Strmec, Slovenia. This is one of perhaps a dozen similar Eastern Celtic helmets recovered from sites as widespread as Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine and southern Russia. All are of three-part construction; one from the Sava river in Croatia has an iron skull and bronze brow-, neck- and ear-guards plus a low central comb (compare with **Plate D2**). The embossed decoration on such finds is clearly Celtic, including symbols such as severed heads and *triskele* discs. (National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubiana; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

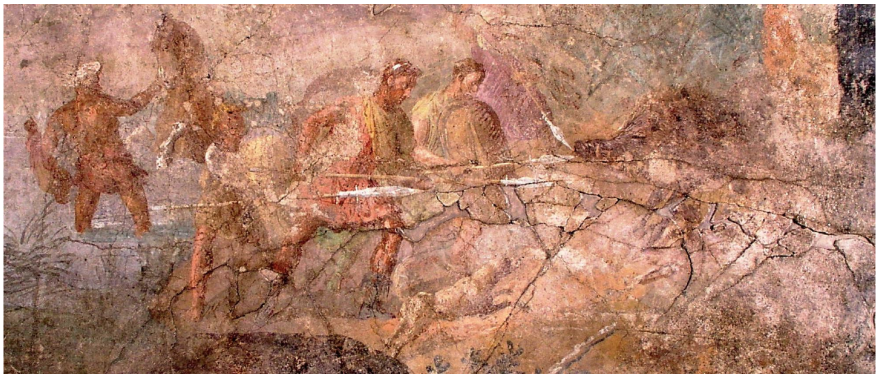
It was also from the Etruscans that the Roman soldier inherited the heavy *paenula,* worn mainly as protection from bad weather when travelling (Cic., *Pro Mil*. XX). The phrase *scindere paenulam* ('to undo the mantle') was used in the sense of urging a traveller to accept the hospitality of one's house (Cic., *Ad Att.*, XIII, 33). Its shape is clearly visible on Etruscan urns of the 1st century BC: it appears to have been a long, hooded, roughly semi-circular cloak, with the front opening usually fastened part way down from the neck. It could thus be worn with the two halves of the front thrown back over the shoulders like wings, so as to leave the arms comparatively free. Cicero used the expression *paenula irretitus*, i.e. 'wrapped in the cloak'.

Traditionally accustomed to campaigning seasons beginning in March in Mediterranean climates, Romans despised trousers as barbarous or effeminate (Cicero, *Ad Fam*., IX, 15, 2–6: *bracatae nationes,* 'trouser-clad peoples'). However, the practical needs of an army campaigning in northern regions prevailed over Roman prejudice. Caesar mentions protective garments worn by his soldiers in the harsh Gallic winters, using the generic term *tegimenta*

(*BG* VI; *BC* III) in a probable reference to the use of Celtic trousers or other native garments *(gallici habitus)*. In Gallia and Germania the severe weather encouraged the adoption of local garments, among which trousers featured widely. We cannot forget that Caesar's army crossed the mountains of the Cevennes in winter; and even he himself adopted such clothing in Germany to disguise himself while trying to reach besieged troops (Suet., *Caes*. LVIII).



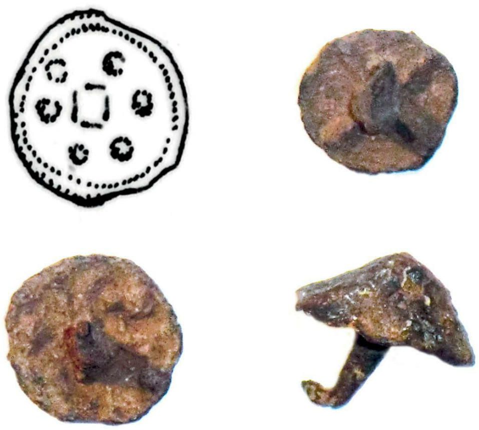
Detail from the 1st-century BC Julii Mausoleum at Glanum, showing Celto-Roman horse harness, including (low centre) the four-horned saddle. The harness might be adorned with costly *phalerae* medallions, and the monument also shows Greek-style *ephippia* saddle-cloths. Celtic horsemanship was at high level when cavalry auxiliaries began to be employed in the Roman army. The Gauls used a snaffle bit *(frenum)*, iron horseshoes, and spurs *(calcares).* (*in situ*, Saint-Remy-de-Provence; author's photo)



Boar-hunt scene in a fresco from the 'Villa Rustica' at Gragnano near Stabiae, second half of 1st century BC; this exceptional painting, recently discovered, was buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD. The figure at left centre, wearing a sleeveless pink-red *tunica,* represents a Roman landowner, and thus perhaps an equestrian military officer. Note also the yellow-brown colour of the shields, one of them edged with blue. (Photo courtesy of Dr Cesare Rusalen)

Both Catullus and Valerius Maximus (Val. Max., *Mem.*, IX, 12, 7) speak of a kerchief *(sudarium)* already used in the 1st century BC; this may be the ancestor of the *focale* typically worn by the Imperial legionary, but mufflers called *focalia* are remembered by Quintilian writing in the 1st century AD. At the other extreme, the *subligaculum* or *campestre* was a kind of loincloth worn by youths when they exercised semi-naked on the Campus Martius. It was sometimes worn in warm weather in place of the tunic, as well as under the tunic and the toga (Ascon. *ad Cic. pro Scauro*; Hor. *Ep*. I. 11, 18).

The most famous military shoes of the Roman army, the *caligae* sandals of Etruscan origin, began to be used in the 2nd–1st centuries BC, as attested by Cicero (*Ad Att.*, II, 3), who remembers their use by Pompey. These strong, heavy sandals, constructed of an interlaced web of straps which covered the foot and ankle, had thick multi-layered soles reinforced with hobnails.



Caligae nails from Alesia, 52 BC. The sole of the military sandal was thickly studded with hobnails (*clavi caligarii* – Plin., *HN* XXXIV, 41; IX, 18). The hollow conical nailheads of this period are notably larger than later Imperial specimens, and bear engraved crosses and dots which may be manufactuers' marks. (Musée Parc Alésia; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

Officers wore finer *carbatinae* white shoes of interlaced soft hide with tongues, or splendid closed *cothurni* boots of various colours; for example, a pair in blue leather are worn by an officer represented on the Stabiae fresco near Pompeii. One of the most common types of footwear during Caesar's day was a closed buckskin boot called a *pero.* Men of high social class wore so-called *calcei patricii* or *mullei*, soft boots distinctive of senatorial rank. A type termed *aluta* fastened on the instep with four thongs (*quattor corrigiae;*

see Isidorus, *Et.,* IX, 24); it was usually of black colour *(alutae nigrae)* and was decorated with a crescent for patricians.

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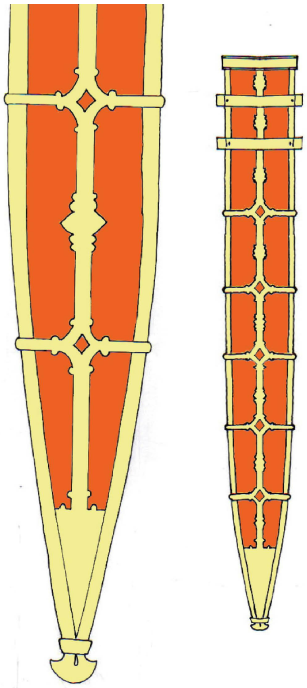

Reconstruction of a 1st-century BC Roman sword scabbard from Pitre in northern France. (Painting by François Gilbert)

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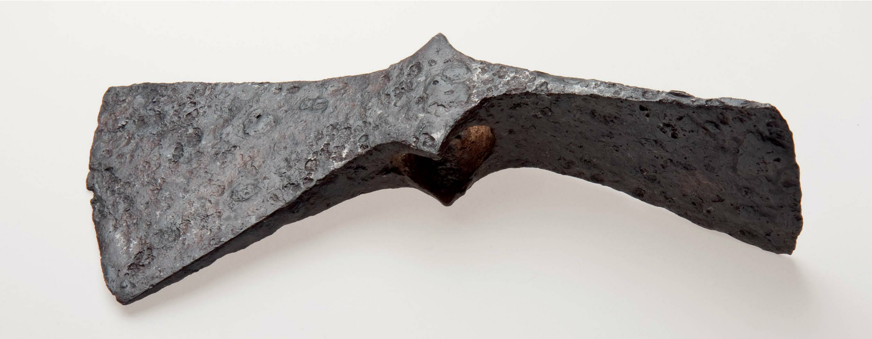

Roman army pickaxe *(dolabra)*, 52 BC, from the battlefield of Alesia. This tool was an important piece of equipment for entrenching work, and was also occasionally used as a close-quarter weapon. Lucanus (*Phars.*, III, 433) is probably referring to it when he mentions the use of a *bipennis* (double-axe.) The Marian reforms of 106 BC ordered that all *milites* were to carry their own marching and bivouac equipment *(impedimenta* or *sarcina).* This regulation kit was to include a goat-skin waterbottle *(uter)* and various working tools (Lucanus, *Phars.,* IV, 294). (Musée Alésia; Conseil Départemental de la Côte-d'Or, fonds Société des Sciences de Semur; photo François Perrodin)

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1st-century BC Etruscan urn representing travel in the underworld. Wagons or carts, while occasionally used by the army, were generally found only with the sutlers *(mercatores)* who followed the legions. A typical two-horse wagon could carry an average load of 550kg (1,210lbs). (Museo Guarnacci, Volterra; author’s photo, courtesy of the Museum)

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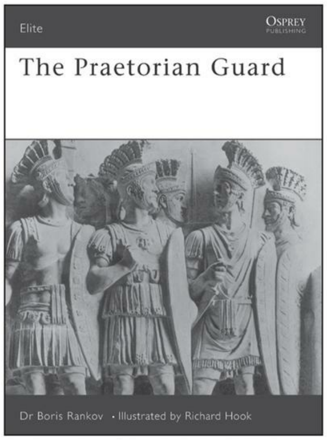
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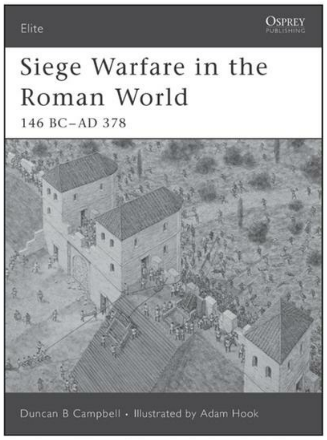
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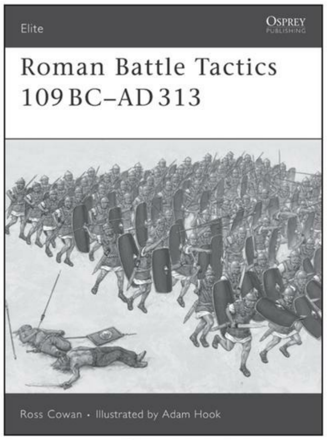
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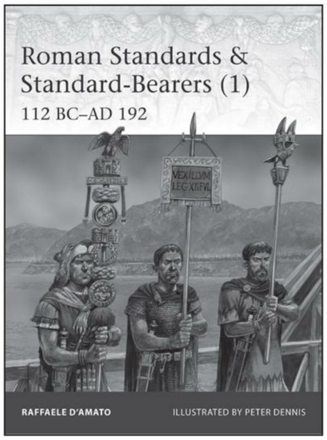
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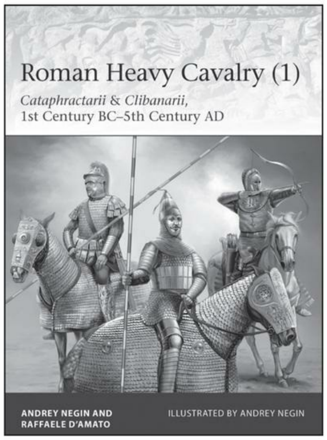
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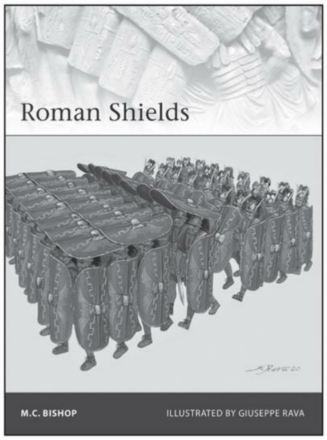
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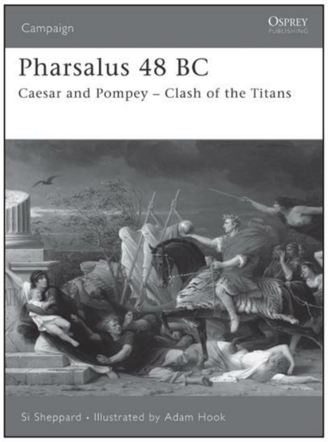
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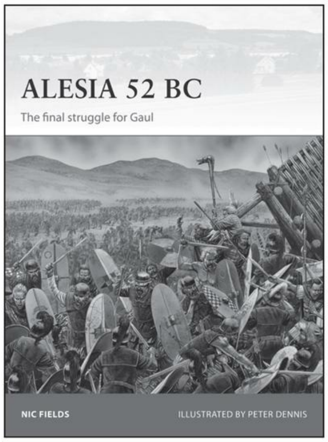
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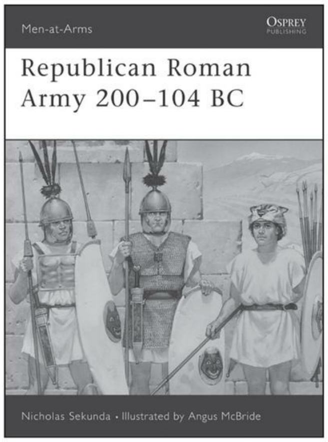
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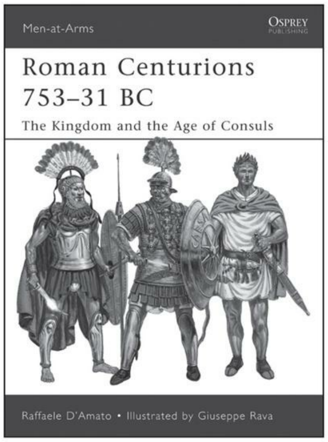
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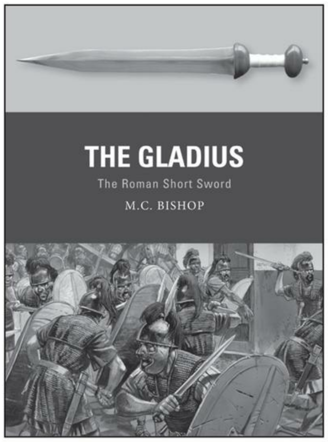
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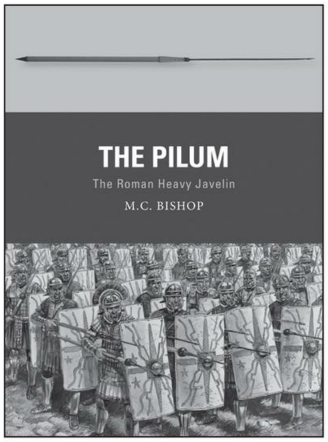
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FRONT COVER, TOP

Reconstruction of Caesar's camp before the *oppidum* of Gergovia; still image from film *'Gergovie, archéologie d'une bataille'*, courtesy of Court-Jus Production.

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Raffaele D'Amato
François Gilbert

Artist's note

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